

Vindicta Pietatis
OR, A
VINDICATION
OF
God's line

in the greatest Strictness and
Spirituality of it.

From the Imputations of
FOLLY & FANCY.

Together with
Several Directions for the Attaining
and Maintaining of a Godly Life.

By R. A.

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To my dearly Beloved in
Christ, the inhabitants of the
Parish of B. in the Coun-
ty of S.

My dearly beloved Brethren,

 He ensuing Sermons, as they
had their Birth for your sakes,
so are they now offered into
your hands ; and they come
unto you, upon the same
important errand, upon which their Au-
thour hath been sent among you, viz. to
shew you the Path of life, and to bring you
into, and establish you in, that holy state
and way that leads to everlasting Blessed-
ness.

The chief hindrances of Sinners eternal
Happiness (next to that innate enmity a-
gainst God and Godliness, which is rooted
in their hearts) are, their prejudices against
and their ignorance of the good wayes of
the Lord.

...and his Instruments have made it
their business, by those volleys of re-
proaches and unreasonablenesse, which
they are continually discharging against
holinesse, to render it in the judgement of
the World, an empty and contemptible
thing.

Two things there are, amongst many
others, which they lay to the reproach of
it. The one that it is folly; whatever there
may be in this Godlinesse, yet it is attend-
ed with so many difficulties, dangers, and
hazards, and will be such an unsufferable
prejudice to all that will have much to
do with it, that it is a foolish thing, upon
such hazards and disadvantages, to ad-
venture upon it. If this will not do, but the
consciences of Men, whilst they appre-
hend the real worth and excellency of it,
stand convinced, that it is not Folly but
wisdom, to adventure on any difficulties,
to run any hazards, for so glorious a prize:
then comes in the second reproach. That
it is but a device, a specious contrivance,
to take up eager heads, to amuse and di-
vert the busie, and keep in awe weak
souls, when if it be enquired into, notwith-
standing its glorious pretences, it will be
found nothing else but imagination, meer
fancy.

The Epistle Dedicatorie

ancy, and no reality at all in the heart of

These impressions I have endeavoured, according to my might, to wipe away from your hearts; and the hearts of such as read, what you have heard, in the ensuing discourses; where, I hope, you will see both sufficient reason, whence to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, to establish your hearts in the firm belief, and resolved embracing of it; and abundant encouragement, to hold on your holy course to the end.

The other hindrance of a Godly Life, is mens ignorance; They walk not in the way of the Lord, because they know not the way of the Lord; some rude and dark notions of Religion possibly they may have, but wherein the Spirit and life of Godliness stands, and how to set upon an holy and heavenly course they cannot tell. This hindrance I have in part prevented in that Description I have given of a godly man, and more fully removed in those Directions which I have subjoyned, for the obtaining and carrying on a godly Life.

Brethren, my hearts desire and Prayer for you is, that what I have done may be successful to your souls; *that you may be saved*, as the Apostle speaks; that you may be brought into, and established in the way of

The Epistle Dedicatory.

truth, and may be found walking in the way of Righteousness. And if the Lord shall be pleased so to follow these my endeavours with his Blessing, that they may contribute any thing to this end ; if the Lord shall so animate these (otherwise) dead words, by his quickening Spirit , that any souls of them that are without may be added to the Church, that any cubits may be added to the stature of those that are within, it shall be a Crown to me, and exceeding Cause of rejoycing. Let the Lord Almighty have the praise for ever , as from all such who shall reap any benefit hereby ; So from the soul of

Your Servant in

the Gospel,

R. A.

The

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2. No Phanatick

3. No Pbre-netick

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1. They take the right way

Which is,

1. Described to be,

The Old and Good

The New and Living

The Strait and Narrow

Wey

ib.

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17

Ephes

Ephes. 5. 15.

*See then that ye walk circumspectly
not as Fools, but as Wise.*



IN the first *Verse* of this Chapter, the Apostle exhorts to the whole duty of Christians, *Be ye followers of God*; the same Exhortation he gives in other terms, *verse 8. Walk as Children of light*: both which Exhortations are comprehensive in the whole duty of Christians.

In the following Verses, he gives particular Rules and Directions, respecting the particular duties of Religion; 1. Walk in Love, *verse 2.* Flee all iniquity, both, 1. Greater iniquities, Fornication and all uncleanness, or Covetousness. 2. Lesser iniquities; 1. The evils of the tongue; neither filthy words, that is, filthy talking, nor foolish talking, nor boasting, which are not convenient. Nor only evil works, but evil words, not only an unclean conversation, but corrupt communication. 2. Uncomeliness in the Saints. 3. Partaking of the same meats and drinks, *verse 7.* which he further beholds from *verse 11.* warning them 1. To have no communion with them.

no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness :
 2. To be guilty of no connivance at them, but rather reprove them.

Of these strict Rules in the Text, he presses the strict observation : See that ye walk circumspectly with an eye to every duty, to every direction ; not only the greater and more weighty duties of Religion, but the lesser and smaller parts of it, even to all that the Lord requires.

In the words you may observe,

1. A strict charge ; See, or look diligently and carefully to it.

2. The matter given in charge, *Walk circumspectly*, which some render *walk warily* ; others, *accurately*, *exactly*, others *walk precisely*, and that a learned Critick affirms, the word *ἀκριβῶς* most properly signifies, *precisely*.

3. A commendation of this circumspect walking ; *This is wise walking*, not as fools, but as wise : Intimating, that to walk loosely, is to walk foolishly, to walk circumspect, is to walk wisely, as men of wisdom.

The observations from these words, are chiefly these two :

Doct. 1. Christians must be Precisians.

2. Precisians are no fools, or, Christians of an exact and circumspect life, are whatever the World accounts of them, truly wise men : This latter Observation is it that I intend to insist upon.

Beloved, I am entering upon a discourse of a sort of people, of whom we may say, with those words, Acts 28. 22. *Concerning this Sect, we know that it is every where spoken against ; And, who* with

with the Apostles, 1 Cor. 4. 9. *Are made a spectacle to the World, and to Angels, and to Men*: concerning whom Heaven and Earth are divided, and the World is divided within it self: Of whom God says, *The World is not worthy*; Of whom the World say, *They are not worthy to live*: Of whom God sayes, *They are the Apple of mine eye*; Of whom the world sayes, *They are a sore in our eye*; whom God accounts his *Jewels*, whom men account the *sift* of the world, and the *off scouring* of all things: Of whom God sayes, *They are the Sons of Wisdom*, but men say, *They are fools*. And, as God, and Men are thus divided, so are men no less divided amongst themselves. Some few say concerning these, as they concerning Christ. *They are good men*. Others say, *No, but they are deceivers of the people*. A Precisian, with the most, is grown into a Proverb of Reproach, a mark of Infamy. To be a Drunkard, a Fornicator, a Swearer, is no reproach, in comparison, of being noted for a Puritan.

Well, but let us enquire a little more narrowly into the way and manner of this sort of people, about whom the World is thus moved, and hath been in all Ages.

In order hereunto I shall shew you,

First, What a Precisian is; and secondly, prove to you, against all the World, that he is no Fool, but a truly, yea, the only wise man, which if I cannot, through the help of God, make evident to the Consciences of impartial and unprejudiced persons, let me passe for a deceiver.

Touching the former, What a Precisian is, Scripture Precisian. Let me first tell you, to prevent mistakes, who he is not.

1. Not a *Pharisee*, a painted Sepulchre, whose Religion is a meer shew: who hath the Form of Godlinesse without the power; who is pure in his own eyes, and yet not cleansed from his filthiness; who is exact about the punctilio's of Religion, and hath a great Zeal about the *minima Leges*, the lower and more circumstantial matters, and neglects the weightier things of the Law, this is not he.

2. Not a *Phanatick*, properly so called, (though that be a vizard put upon him by some, as the Hides of Beasts were put upon the Christians of old) nor a *Phanatick*, I say, whose Religion is all Fancy. Imagination, Enthusiasms, the Dreams and Visions of his own Heart; Neither is this he. Christianity is not a Castle in the air, but is a building that hath Foundation.

3. Not a *Phrenetick*, no son of violence or Contentions, who not knowing what spirit he is of, calls for fire from Heaven to set all in combustion, if every thing be not exactly fashioned according to his own mind. Neither is this he, *The Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable; the servants of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle, &c.*

By a Precisian, I mean a sincere circumspect Christian, one whose care and endeavour is, To walk uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel, who withdrawing himself from the Fellowship, Fashions and Lusts of the World, and deny-

ing

ing himself the sinful Liberties thereof, doth exercise himself to keep a good conscience towards God and men. This is the person against whom the great hate and envy, and severe censures and calumnies of ungodly men, are chiefly intended, under what colour, or disguise soever they are carried; the enmity is not betwixt sinners and Hypocrites, but betwixt Sinners and Saints; the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman, not the pretended, but the true seed, Israelites indeed, are the men whom the Ishmaelites persecute Gal. 4. 29. *He that was born after the flesh, persecuted him not that pretended to be, but was born after the Spirit.* Of this Person, or of this sort of people, I shall give you a more full description in these two Particulars.

1. By their Make, or Constitution.

2. By their Way, or Conversation.

I. By their Constitution, they are made and cut out exactly according to the pattern, they are born of the Spirit, born of God and they bare the express Image of their Father upon them: Col. 3. 10. *Re-created after the Image of Him that created him;* they are of a new Make, from what they were, there is a mighty change wrought in and upon them, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *μεταμορφούμεθα, We are changed into the same image,* In our first birth, we were brought forth in the Image of our first Father, Genesis 1. 3. *Adam begat a Son in his own Image,* that is, a fleshly and earthly Image. The first man was of the Earth, earthly, and such are all his natural Progeny, an earthly seed, an earthly Generation

tion; he that is born of the Spirit, is brought forth in a spiritual frame; *John 3. 6. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit*: He that is born from above is of an Heavenly Nature, as well as Original. The change that Religion makes on men, is not such a low and inconsiderable thing as some Men make it, standing only in some little Reformation of the Life, but it consists chiefly in the renewing of the Soul after the Image of God, the forming of Christ upon the heart of Inner Man. As that second change, which shall be at the Resurrection, will be the transforming of our *vile bodies*, into the likeness of Christs Glorious Body; so this first change is a transforming of our *vile souls* into the likeness of his glorious Spirit. Christians are the Temples of the Lord, and as *Moses* made the Tabernacle exactly according to the pattern shewed him in the Mount, so these spiritual Temples are made exactly according to their pattern, *2 Cor. 3. 3. They are the Epistles of Christ, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in Tables of stone, but in fleshy Tables of the heart*. Carnal Men plead hard for their Christianity, they are all Christians, all Disciples, all the people of God, though they be ignorant, Unbelieving, Earthly, Sensual, yet some kind of Profession (such as it is) there is among them, a profession of Faith, a profession of Repentance, which, though it amount to little more than bare (*saying*) I believe, I repent, I am sorry for my Sins, yet this must passe for Christianity. But (as Christ once said to the tempting Jews (*whose is this Image and superscription?* Where is the Divine

Divine Stamp and Impress? Where is your likenesse to Christ? Is there not still the Village of the Old man? Is there not the old Pride, the old Envy, the old Enmity against Holinesse, the old Guile, and Falshood, and Lust still spread over you? Is this the Image of Christ? Christians that are truly such, are precisely formed according to this pattern; they have Face for Face, Limb for Limb; Grace for Grace; all the Grace that is in Christ, is truly, though not yet perfectly coppied out upon them, though the Characters may be something blotted and obscured, by reason of the remainders of corruption, yet there they are; the same mind, the same heart that was in Christ, is in them. A true Christian is a Transcript of Christ. *As he is, so we are in the World.*

This inward change; this forming of Christ upon the heart, is the very Soul and Life of Christianity; you may as well call him a *Man* whose Soul is not in him, as you may call him a *Christian*, who hath not the Spirit of Christ in him. Let no man count himself a Christian from any outward priviledges, much less from any outward *Paint* of Christianity, but from the inward *Prints* of it upon his heart. Thou hopest thou art a Christian, but where is the Image and superscription of Christ upon thy heart? Dost thou not find, not only an unlikenesse to Christ, but a dislike of Christ, an inward loathing of the holinesse of Christ, and a rising of heart against the strictnesse of that holy life which he requires? Dost thou not find a favour of earth-

lineſſe and fleſhlineſſe bearing the ſway and rule in
 thine heart? Doſt thou not find principles, tend-
 ing altogether to looſeneſſe and licencioſneſſe? Is
 this thy likeneſſe to Chriſt? Doſt thou not find an
 emptineſſe of the Light, Life, Love, Grace of
 Chriſt in thy Soul? Whatever thou haſt of Chriſt
 without, thou haſt nothing of Chriſt within. De-
 ceive not thy ſelf, God is a Spirit, and his eye
 is firſt upon the ſpirits and ſouls of men; he loves
 truth in the inward parts, he loves holineſſe in the
 inward parts; *He is a Jew which is one inwardly,*
 and he is a Chriſtian which is one inwardly: He
 is not a Chriſtian, who is only outwardly ſo. Nay
 further, as he is not a Chriſtian, which is not in-
 wardly ſo, ſo neither he that hath ſomething of the
 inwards of a Chriſtian, and hath not radically all
 the Graces of Chriſt in him; he that hath faith, and
 hath not Charity, he that hath the light of a
 Chriſtian, and not the love, he that hath the deſires
 of a Chriſtian, and not the conſcience of a Chriſti-
 an, he that wants any one of the vital parts of
 Chriſtianity, hath nothing at all; a thorow Chriſ-
 tian is throughout conform to the pattern. And
 thus you have a deſcription of Scripture Preciſians,
 by their Make or Conſtitution.

II. I ſhall deſcribe them by their Converſation.

{ 1. By the end of their Converſation.
 and that { 2. By their courſe or Motion to this
 { end.

1. By the end of their Converſation; What
 is it that theſe Men would have, or whither are
 they bound? They cannot be content to go
 along

along with their Neighbours, to live and do as others: whither is it that they are going, or what is it that they would have? Why this is it, they are travelling Heaven-ward, trading to another Country; they are bound for the holy Land, for the holy City, they are going towards Sion or Jerusalem, which is above. *Jerem. 58. 5. They shall ask the way to Sion with their faces thitherward.* Sion was the ancient seat of Gods residence among his People, the place of Gods solemn service, where he was wont to meet his People, and appear unto them. This Sion which was here below, the place of Gods gracious presence, was a type of that Sion which is above, Heaven, the place of Gods glorious presence; this sort of people are travelling Heaven-ward, they are those Strangers and Pilgrims here on Earth, mentioned, *Heb. 11. 13, 14. That are seeking a Country, not an earthly, but an Heavenly Country, as is there exprest.* There are two things in the forementioned Text, that discover whither they are travelling. 1. The inquiry they make, you may guesse whither a Traveller is going, when you hear him ask diligently the way to such or such a place. *They shall ask the way to Sion.* 2. Their setting their faces thitherward, *They shall ask, &c. with their Faces thitherward.* Their setting their Faces towards Sion, notes two things. 1. Their looking wishly towards it, a Travellers eye is much towards his journeys end; Christians that are making Heaven-ward are much and often looking Heaven-ward; a Christians heart is in his eye, and his eye is on his home. 2. Their setting their faces

ces thither-ward, notes the bending of their course thither-ward. 'Twas said of Christ, Luke 9. 51. *He set his face to go to Jerusalem.* Christians set their faces Heaven-ward, and thither they bend their course. They are much in asking the way, *What must I do to be saved? who shall ascend into the holy Hill? what manner of persons must we be, that we may get thither? and they take the way that leads thither.*

And this is a further Description of this sort of people, they are men for another Country, men for another world; they are born from Above, and they seek things Above; they are risen with Christ, and they are ascending unto Christ; their treasure is above, their hopes are above, and thither are they hastening; whatever they have of this worlds goods for the support of their life, yet these things are not the scope and end of their life: They seek that glory, honour, and Immortality which comes from God, and they are going on from strength to strength, till they come and appear before God in *Sion*. And herein lies a special difference betwixt them and all others whatsoever; Worldly men are men for this world, for a wordly happiness, for a wordly heaven, an heaven on earth; or if they have any thoughts or hopes of another heaven, yet they think not so much of it as to ask the way thither, How seldom do we hear any such question put by them, *What must I do to be saved?* What must I do to be Rich? Which is the way to Honour and temporal Preferment? or how may I escape trouble and save my self harmless? These iniquities, and such like, are ordinarily in their hearts and mouths; but such

a serious question as this, *What must I do to be saved?* comes so seldom from any of them, that 'tis a wonder how the Devil with all his skill can make them once believe or hope that ever they shall attain to that salvation : or if they do ask the way to Heaven. Yet it is not with their faces but with their backs thither-ward : whatever little talk there may fall in sometimes about Souls and eternal salvation, yet their faces are set another way, they bend their course to Egypt and Sodom, towards their wealth or their wickedness. Hearken, O ye foolish worldlings, you say every one of you, you hope for salvation, but which way are your faces set? whither are you going? Is that way of Swearing, Lying, and Lust, and carnal Liberty, and Covetousness, and Sensuality, to which you give up your selves, is this the way of Life? In this a sincere Christian is differenced from all others in the world, he fixes his heart, and his hope, and aims upon an eternal happiness, and he bends his course towards the obtaining of it.

2. By their course or motion towards this end. And here I shall give you a three-fold description of them :

1. They are such as walk in a right way.
2. They are upright and exact in the way.
3. From this way they will not be turned aside by any flatteries of the world on one hand or frowns on the other.

I. They are such as walk in the right Way which is called sometimes *the way of the Lord*, sometimes *the way of Truth*, sometimes *the way*
of

of Righteousness, sometimes the way of Life, Psa. 1. 1, 2. Psal. 116. 1. They understand which is the right way by these three pair of way-marks.

1. The Old and Good way.
2. The New and Living way.
3. The Strait and narrow way.

First, The Old and Good way, that is the right way, that is the way they are commanded to enquire after and take, Jer, 6. 16. *Stand ye in the ways and see, ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein. Stand ye in the ways and see.* There are many ways in the world, some that are apparently the way of Death, and not a few that pretend to be the way of Life. If you would know which of these ways is the right, ask for the old Path, the Good way : *The old path*, that which was from the beginning. Godliness is no innovation, it is as old as the world, 1 John. 1. 1. *That which was from the beginning declare we unto you.* Then it is the good as well as the old way. Antiquity alone is not enough to prove that we are in the right ; there is an evil way that is an old way, the way of sin is very ancient. The Right way is the Old and Good way ; there is a threefold good, Profitable, Pleasant, and Honest. Though the Right way have both profit and pleasure in it : yet the proper Character of it is, *the honest way*, the way of Righteousness, Mercy, Holiness, &c. Mic. 6. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man : what is good ; to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* This is good, the good way. Phil. 4. 8, 9. *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things*

things are just, whatsoever things are pure, &c. these things do, and the God of Peace shall be with you.

Secondly, The new and living way. Three things, it may be, you will ask me about this.

1. What is this new and Living way,

I answer, Christ is this way, John 14. 6. I am the way. Hebr. 10. 19. Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest; verse 20. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, &c. a Christian that walks Heaven-ward walks in Christ, Gal. 2. 6. He walks in Union with Christ, in the Name, and strength, and spirit of Christ, he that is not in Christ is out of his way, whatever good there seems to be in the way he is going, yet it is not saving good.

2. Whether there be two right wayes?

I answer, No, but one; it is true, there is mention made also of the way of Gods Commandments, but these make not two distinct wayes, but are one and the same way; faith in Christ, and obedience to the Law of God, are the one way of Life: He that walks in God walks in Christ, it is through Christ, and our Union with him, that we are strengthened and enabled to do the will of God, it is through Christ that what we do is accepted of God; there is no act of obedience, be it never so excellent for the matter of it, that is a step to the Kingdom of God, that hath not something of Christ in it, that is not done through his Spirit, and sprinkled with his Blood: and so on the other side, whatever faith, and hope, and confidence we have in Christ, if it be not such a faith, such an hope as brings forth obedience

dience to the will of God, it cannot save us : this way of faith and obedience, this is the right way, and the one and only way of Life. In all that general Assembly and Church of the first-born, that are already in Heaven, there is not one soul but entred by this one way. *Abel; and Enoch, and Abraham and Moses, and David, and Peter, and Paul,* with the whole generation of Saints now in glory, they all went the same way, they walked with God, and lived and dyed in Faith, and now inherit the Promises. And all the residue of Saints that are yet in their Pilgrimage; yea, whoever shall be in the Ages to come, must by this one way enter into the Kingdom of God. This is the good and old way which was from the beginning, this is the new and living way which shall be to the end, *Tit. 2. 8. These things I will that thou affirm constantly, That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable for men.* If this be so, if this be the one and only way of Life, then in what case are the sinful unbelieving world? Whether are ye going, Oh ye sons of folly? You tell us; you hope to be saved, what in your unbelief and folly? Search and see if in the whole Book of God you finde any other way of Salvation, but Faith in Christ, and obedience to the Gospel.

3. How can one and the same way be old, and yet new? I answer, 'Tis old, and yet not antiquated, 'tis new, and yet no Innovation; 'tis old, because it was from the beginning; 'tis new, because now in the latter end of the world it hath been newly cast up, made more plain, easie and open.

Thir dly;

Thirdly, The strait and narrow Way; Matth. 14. Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. Christians must go by a line, there is no Elbow-room for Lust to expatiate, every step on this hand, or on that, is a deviation; it is a Way that is hedged in; the Commandment is the hedge, which limits us within a very narrow path: Christians must live by Rule, they must not eat nor drink but by Rule, they must not buy nor sell but by Rule, they must not work nor sit still, they must not speak nor keep silence but by Rule, Gal. 6. 16. As many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them. 'Tis also a narrow Way, the word might have well been translated, a troublesome, or painfull way; the Verb from which the word comes, signifies to oppress: there are many pressures and afflictions to be met with all in this Way, the Cross is a Christians Waymark; Through many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God: The way of sin is a plain, there is neither hedge nor ditch to limit them, there is neither bush nor brake to discourage them.

Now this is the way which circumspect Christians take; this *Good and Old Way*, this *New and Living Way*, this *Straight and Narrow way*, this is the *Right Way*, and this is also the most *Excellent Way*. For,

1. It is the *Way of Truth*, *Psal. 11. 30. I have chosen the way of truth: John 14. 6. I am the Way, and the truth, and the life: It is the Way which the Truth or Word of God doth prescribe to us, it is the true Way, that is indeed in all the parts of it that which it declares*
it

it self to be : The way of sinners is a lye, a way made up of lyes ; The evil works of sinners are lyes, *Prov. 11. 16. The wicked work a deceitfull work,* the work of a lie ; the words signifie, their words are lying words, their very duties are a lye, *Hos. 11. 12. Ephraim compasseth me about with lyes :* that is, with lying Duties, lying Prayers, lying Sacrifices, lying Praises, their Prayers are no Prayers, their Sacrifices are no Sacrifices, they do but dissemble with God, and deceive themselves in all their performances ; their hopes are a lye, their comforts are a lye, their Refuges are a lye ; the way of sinners is wholly made up of lyes : But the way of Christians is a true way, their Duties their Comforts, their Joyes, their Hopes have truth and reality in them, *Psalme 25. 10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to them that keep his Covenant.* Now look what excellency there is of truth above a lye ; so great is the Excellency of this way of Christians above all other ways.

2. It is the way of Righteousness and Holiness ; Holiness hath a glory in it, every thing by how much the more pure it is, by so much the more precious in its kind. What other excellency have the Angels of light above the Devils, but their holiness ? What was it that transformed the Angels that fell into Devils, but the loss of their holiness ? Wherein stands the Reasonable creatures likeness to the God of glory, but in their holiness ? This is the divine Nature they are made partakers of, the Spirit of God and of Glory resting upon them, *1 Pet. 4. 14.*

Holiness

holiness hath such a self-evidencing excellency, that the consciences of carnal men do often, whether they will or no, give their testimony to it. Who is there almost, whose lust hath transformed into so very a Brute, but many times, even when his tongue is reproaching it, his Conscience gives his Tongue the lye? Who is there, whose Lust hath so totally put out his Light, that doth not, in his serious Judgment, conclude, That a gracious, humble, meek, merciful, sober heavenly life, is really more excellent (though not so suitable to his brutish appetite) than lewdness and sensuality? There is such a beauty and Majesty in holiness that doth command an acknowledgment of it, from all sorts of knowing men.

3. It is the way of God, not only the Way wherein the Lord hath commanded them to walk, but wherein the Lord appears to them, wherein they have the Vision and Fruition of God; and therefore a godly life is often expressed by walking with God, by living in fellowship or communion, or acquaintance with God, Psal. 16. 8. *I have set the Lord alwayes before me*, Psal. 17. 15. *I will behold thy face in Righteousness*. Enoch walked with God, Noah walked with God. Good company will make any way pleasant, how staggie or dirty soever our way may be under foot, it is pleasant to see the Sun shine over us, Psal. 50. 23. *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God*. The Lord meets his people in his Wayes; and causes all his goodness to pass on before them, proclaiming his Name. *The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness*. This Vision of God makes all the labours and difficulties of this way sweet & pleasant to them, certainly this is a blessed way, for God is in it. Where is blessedness to be had but in God? how is blessed-

ness to be had in God, but in beholding and enjoying of him? wherein stands the blessedness of Heaven, but in the Vision and Fruition of God? Christians, let all the ungodly world say all they can, to disgrace and disparage the way of Righteousness, as a wretched, disconsolate, and contemptible way; yet till they can confute your senses, and make you not to believe what you taste and see, be not discouraged, neither let them delude you into any better opinion of their ways of sin, from any pleasure, credit, ease, or gain, that is in them; God is in the way of Righteousness, and there alone to be found and enjoyed, and therefore this is the most blessed and excellent way.

4. It is the way of the Kingdom; the proper excellency of the means stands in this, That it will certainly bring about its end; that's our best way that will bring us safely home. This way is called the way of life, *Psal. 16. 11. Thou wilt shew me the path of life.* 2 Pet. 1. 5, 11. *Add to your faith vertue, to vertue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, patience, godliness, be. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom:* If there were no other excellency of this way, yet this is enough to commend it, and exalt it above all other ways, that it's the way to Heaven. If the way of Holiness and Righteousness, were in all other respects, as despicable and uncomfortable a way as the world imagine it; If Godliness were in it self as great a burden and bondage, as carnal men account it; If all the reproaches, and slanders, and calumnies, and lying reports, that ungodly men cast upon the way of the Lord, were true; yet this, that it's the way to everlasting blessedness, would answer all that is spoken against it. If you were to go to London upon a
business

business, wherein your life and all that ever you had were concerned, you would not stand reasoning thus; Is not the way to *York* a better and more pleasant way? Whatever the way to *London* be, how long, or how dirty, or how dangerous, or how hard to finde soever it be, yet your life & estate depending on your going thither, leaving all other wayes & disputes about them, you would take the way that leads thither. The way of the Lord, whatever you have to say against it, to discourage or make you unwilling to travel it, yet 'tis the only way you have to save your souls, the only way to eternal blessedness; when you have made all your objections, and all your excuses, you must take up this holy course of life, or you can never come into the Kingdom of God. The way of carnal Jollity and Merriment is as you think a more pleasant and delightful way: But is this your way to Heaven? The way of covetousness and worldliness, you count a more gainful and profitable way; but is this the way of life? The way of slothfulness and idleness, is you think an easie way; but is this the way of the Kingdom? The strict and severe way of Holiness, hath little carnal delight, ease and worldly profit in it; but is not this the way to everlasting life? Heb. 12. 14. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God.* Now if all this be so, (search sinners, search and consider if it be not so, consult the Scriptures, consult your Reasons and Consciences, and see if you find them not all bearing witness to this Truth) and if these things be so, as hath been said, then come all ye foolish, and vain-hearted persons, and judge of the unreasonableness of these scoffing demands of the looser sort to the people of God, who in scorn and derision will be often

asking of them, why must you be so nice? Why so precise? Why so strict, and making so much ado about every small matter? Why cannot you be content to do as others, and take the same liberty as others? Why, 'tis all one as if they should demand of them. Why will you keep your way, the way of Life? Why will you be saved? Why can't you be content to be damned as well as others? Is there not a great deal of wisdom and reason in such questionings and scoffing demands? If you stood by a dangerous mighty Bogue, through which there was one narrow tract of firm ground, and should see a company of poor Creatures even sunk, and almost swallowed up, and choak'd in the mud and mire, on the one hand and the other, and yet should you see them laughing, and mocking, and jeering at those who keep the narrow tract of firm ground, that would bring them safely over; Would you not say, they were all mad or bewitched? This is the case of foolish Worldlings, they are sunk in the Mud, they are even swallowed up and choaked with their lusts, and ready to perish, and yet they fall a laughing and deriding of them, who will keep the sure way. Sinners, what do you mean? you are sinking; you are sinking; a few steps further and you will be swallowed up. Why will you not come back, and get into this safe way? Leave your scoffing at the Saints, and learn of them, leave your judging and censuring, and follow them in the same holy steps that they are going in, before you.

II. They are upright and exact in the way, they walk on in the straight way, with a straight foot, Psal. 119. 1. *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, or the perfect, or entire in the way, Psal. 32. 1. I said*

I will take heed to my wayes, that I offend not. It is said of Caleb, Numb. 14. 24. That he followed the Lord fully. Luk. 1. 6. 2 Cor. 1. 12. This is our rejoycing the testimony of our Conscience, that in all simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world, 1 Thes. 2. 20. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and blamelessly we behaved our selves among you. Observe it, they lived a holy, harmelesse, blamelesse life, and that holinesse which appeared upon them, was not a cheat, or juggle, to deceive the world, but was really what it appeared to be, and for this they appealed to a threefold witness. 1. A witness in their breasts, the testimony of their own Consciences; *This is our rejoycing, the testimony of our Consciences.* 2. A witness in the world; *Ye are witnesses,* your eyes have seen what our life hath been; be but true witnesses, and then be you witnesses; speak but what you have seen, and speak the worst (*among you that believe*) the world will be ready to say, you are too crafty to let us know what you do in secret, when you are amongst your selves; I, but says he, let them that believe, speak, those that have been with us publickly and privately, what our conversation hath been; if it be said, they are of your own party, and will not speak all they know, then he appeals to a third witness, a Witness in Heaven, (*and God also*) he that seeth things, before whom are all our ways, he that seeth all things, seeth our integrity and blamelessness.

But here, that I be not mistaken, I must distinguish betwixt their *aims*, or what they are pressing and reaching towards, and their attainments, or what they have reached to. The aims of these circumspect Christians in their whole course, are

perfection, Phil. 3. 14. *I press towards the mark*; they would keep their way without the least wandering, they would not tread one step awry, they would not speak one word amiss, they would not think one thought amiss, they would not neglect any one duty, nor commit any one sin, but would be what the Apostle would have them to be, *Holy and harmless, the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked generation*: These are their *Aims*, and as to their *Attainments*, though they fall short of their desires, they cannot do as they would, *The good that I would, I do not*: yet they do their best, they follow the Lord with the best of their understanding, serve the Lord with the best of their strength, and when they have done their best, they mourn and grieve that 'tis no better.

That I may more distinctly open this exact and upright walking in the *way* of the Lord, which their hearts are set upon, I shall consider it,

1. As it hath respect to the Commandment.
2. As it hath respect to Conscience.

1. Their exact walking, as it hath respect to the Commandment, stands, 1. In having respect to every *Commandment*, to the whole Word of God, Psal. 119. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy Commandments*, Mat. 28. 20. *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have Commanded you*. The life of a Christian is a busie life, the Words of God finds us much work to do, we have work for every faculty and member; our understandings have their work, our wills, affections, consciences, tongues, ears, eyes, hands, have all their particular works assigned them; every grace hath its work, faith hath its work, love hath its work, patience hath its work; every lust makes

makes us work, to restrain, deny, watch, crucifie them; these are weights and clogs that will hang on, and will hinder us from all other works, if we let them alone; these are working against us continually, and apt to set us on work against our selves; a working mischief and ruine to our souls; if they be not continually looked to, and kept under. We have work against us for every condition, our prosperity finds us much work, to keep our selves humble; heavenly, watchful, in an holy fear and jealousie, lest the contentments and pleasures of this life, make an invasion, and inrode upon our hearts, and spoyle us of our graces and comforts. Our afflictions find us work, to keep our spirits from sinking and fainting, from murmuring, and envying at those whose way doth prosper. We have all the set and solemn duties of Religion to attend upon, we have praying work, and hearing work, and Sacrament work, and reading work, and heart-searching work, and meditating work: We have work to be done for others, our neighbours and acquaintance, our friends and our enemies, our families, our servants, our children, we have not only work to do for them as men, but work to do for God with them, God hath work for us to do among our neighbours, God hath work for us to do in our families, and for our friends and enemies, instructing work, reproving work, praying work, works of mercy and charity, &c. we have a continual succession of work, every day hath its businesse: *Christians* must have no sleeping *dayes*, their very *Sabbaths* must be working *dayes*; we must be at work for our souls, even on those *dayes* wherein we must do no bodily work. *There remains a rest for the People of God.*

such a rest, wherein they shall work no more, nor be weary any more, wherein all their work shall be to eat of the fruit of their doings, but on this side that rest, there is no rest, but we must be full of labour.

You see the Word hath provided much work for Christians; now those that are circumspect and upright, and in the way will be through pac'd, and stick at nothing the Word requires, they are for any service, ready for every good work, they will not pick and choose, they will not halt or baulk with God, but as the Apostle, *Col. 4. 10. Endeavour to stand compleat in all the Wills of God.* Those duties that have most pain in them, those duties that have most hazard attending them, those duties that have the greatest contrariety to their natural temper and dispositions; if they be duties, if the word says; *This must be done*, this is that which the Lord requires, an upright heart will yield and stoop to them. Brethren if there be any one thing required in the whole Book of God that you cannot consent to, but allow your selves in the ordinary neglect of concerning which you say with *Naaman, The Lord spare me in this one thing*, whatsoever else you do you can have no comfort that your hearts are upright.

2. In having respect to the most *spirituall and inward part of the Commandment*; the Commandment contains *fugienda* and *facienda*, sins to be avoided, and duties to be performed; and both these are either outward or spiritual. 1. As there are outward sins to be avoided, sins of the mouth, sins of the eyes, ears, hands, so there are inward sins, spiritual wickednesses, *evil thoughts*. *Jer. 4. 14. unclean lusts*, *Mat. 5. 28. inordinate affections, an evil conscience*, and the like: now sincere Christians have an eye to, and hold a strict hand upon these
spiri-

spiritual wickednesses, *that* to have their consciences purged, *their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, their affections and lusts mortified, Gal. 5. 24. *They that are Christs, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*; their care is, not only that they be no drunkards, or swearers, nor lyars, nor railers, nor oppressors, nor of proud, froward, fretful, impatient carriages and behaviours; but they would not covet, they would not lust, they would not be of proud, impatient, fretful, envious, unpeaceable hearts, they would not that an evil thought, not a vain thought should lodge within them. 2. As there are outward duties to be performed, as praying, hearing, works of mercy, &c. so there are spiritual duties, purely spiritual, as the internal acting of faith, and love, and hope, and the fear of God, the souls choosing of God, cleaving to God, rejoicing, delighting in God, meditating of him, &c. Exact Christians have a special respect to those spiritual duties, in the exercise whereof stands chiefly their living in a holy fellowship, communion, and acquaintance with God; and for outward duties, their care is to perform them *spiritually*, they pray with the mouth, and pray with the spirit; they praise the Lord with their lips, and offer up their hearts as a spiritual sacrifice; they hear with their ears, and with their understanding also; they labour to bring their souls under the Word, to pour forth their souls in prayer, to draw forth their souls in their very alms, Isa. 58. *If thou draw forth thy soul to the hungry*, Psal. 69. 10. *I chastened my soul with fasting*. Oh Brethren, if this be to walk exactly, then how much loosenesse doth this discover in us, loosenesse in our very Duties; men

men do not only *swear like Libertines*, and *swear like Libertines*, and *neglect duties like Libertines*, but *perform duties like Libertines*; thou that usest to pray in thy Closet, or in thy Family, or in the Congregation, in an outward formal way, and dost not pour out thy Soul in prayer, thou prayest like a *Libertine*; thou that fastest, and doest not chasten thy Soul with fasting, thou fastest like a *Libertine*; thou that hearest, and doest not bring thy soul under the word, thou hearest like a *Libertine*; this is loose praying, and loose hearing, loose from the Rule, which requires the exercising of the inner man as well as the outward.

3. In observing the command to the utmost; and here I shall give a fourfold further description of them.

1. They endeavour to get up their hearts to the highest pitch of affection, care, and activity: They would be the best Christians, the most humble, the most mortified, the most patient, the most exemplary and active Christians: not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 11. 2 Cor. 7. Yea, what care; yea, without clearing of your selves; yea, what indignation; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal, &c. A sincere Christian would be a zealous Christian, in his sincerity stands the height of it. Zeal is not a distinct grace, but the height of every grace: Love in the height of it, Desire in the height of it, Care and Resolution to follow God in the height of it: A zealous Christian exercises every grace, performs every Duty, and doth it with all his might; he is not willing to spare, or to favour himself, but will spend and be spent in the work of the Lord; the flesh will be

be pleading for a little ease, for moderation, it will be soliciting the Sobl as Peter did Christ, *Pitty thy self, favour thy self*, thou wilt never hold out at this rate, thou wilt pull all the Country about thine ears if thou beest thus hot and forward, but the Soul returns the same answer as Christ did to him, *Get thee behind me Satan*, hold thy peace slothful heart, let me alone, for I will speak for God while I have a tongue to speak; while I have an heart, while I have an hand, while I have an eye, while I have a soul, while I have a being, I will follow on after the Lord, I will serve him, I will praise him, I will sacrifice all I am, and have, to him, and then come on me what will.

2. They are *studying and seeking out opportunities for service*. Such Christians are of *strict lives*, but of *large hearts*; of *strict consciences*, but of *large desires and aims*. Grace sets limits to their consciences, but none to their holy affections; they never do so much for God, but they are studying how they may do more, *Isa. 32. 8. A liberal Man deviseth liberal things; a merciful man deviseth merciful things; a righteous man deviseth righteous things*, he doth not only exercise Liberality and Mercy; and work Righteousness, when he hath an opportunity put into his hands; but he sits down and considers what great things the Lord hath done for him, what marvellous loving kindnesse the Lord hath shewed to him, and thereupon studies and casts about what greater things then yet he hath done he may do for the Name of God: as it is said of the wicked, *Proverbs 6. 14. He deviseth mischief continually*; And *Psalms 64. 6. They search out iniquity, they accomplish a diligent search; search out for every oppor-*

opportunity to work wickednesse to satisfie their
 Iust : So Righteous men search out, and make a di-
 ligent seach after opportunities to work Righteous-
 nesse, 2 Sam. 9. 3. *Is there not yet a man left of the*
house of Saul (saith David) to whom I might shew the
kindness of God ? Is there not yet a poer Sool in
distresse, to whom I might shew kindness for the
Name of God ? Is there not yet a poor Family in
miserie, to whom I might shew mercy ? Is there not
yet a poor sinner to whom I might give counsel ? Is
there not yet a poor Saint to whom I might admi-
nister comfort for the sake of my God ? As it is said
 of the Devil, *He goeth up and down seeking whom he*
may devour ; So may it be said, of such, they go up
 and down seeking whom they might, save and re-
 cover out of the snares of the Devil ; other men,
 what good soever they do, it is as little as may be ;
 their consciences will not let them be quiet, but
 something must be done, when they have done so
 much as will but keep conscience quiet they have
 done : A sincere Christian hath his love to satisfie,
 his desires to satisfie, as well as his conscience ; he
 loves much, and it is not a little duty that will sa-
 tisfie strong love.

3. *They shun occasions and temptations to sin ;* they
 would keep at as great a distance from sin as pos-
 sible, they are careful to keep far enough within
 their line, they dare not venture to their utmost
 border lest they go beyond it ere they are aware :
 A wary Christian, having observed what things
 have proved snares and temptations to him, and
 have drawn him aside to iniquity formerly, will
 take heed how he comes nigh them again : If carnal
 society hath cool'd and damp'd his heart and left a
 fleshy savour upon his Spirit, he will take heed how
 he

he comes into such company again : If going to his utmost liberty in the use of the Creatures, either Meat, Drink, or Apparel, hath inticed him beyond his bounds, he will be wary how he allows himself the like liberty, and will deny himself the freedom he might use, rather than again run himself upon danger; he is sensible of his weaknesse to stand against a temptation, and thereupon is the more watchful that he run not into temptation; men that are bold to venture into temptation, to venture into evil company, to venture themselves among frothy and vain persons, especially when they have proved what a snare such have been, again and again to them, it is a sign that they have little fear of sin, care of their souls or consciences, or regard to God, or godlinesse: a circumspect Christian dares not venture so: prophane men wonder at them, why they will be no more free, nor familiar with them, not so much as to sit and be merry with them: *They think it strange* (saith the Apostle) *that you run not with them*: Oh, the reason is, they are afraid of the hook, and therefore dare not meddle with the bait.

4. They abstain from all appearance of evil, that is the command, *1 Thess. 5. 22. Abstain from all appearance of evil*; they would live, not only, *sine crimine*, but *sine labe*, not only without any fault, but without any flaw or scar upon them. *Oportet Cæsaris uxorem absque suspitione vivere.* To the end they may cut off all occasion from them that seek occasion against them, they would do not only things honest, but things of good report too; they enquire concerning what they are about to do, not only a *Liceat*, but a *Decet*; not only whether it be lawful, but whether it be comely; there may be

be divers things that may be lawful in themselves, which are yet unseemly; may look with an evil face: *All things are lawful, (saith the Apostle) but all things are not expedient.* A circumspect Christian, endeavours both to keep a good Conscience, and to keep a good Name; he would keep a good Conscience for his own sake, and a good Name, as far as may be, for his Brethrens sake; his desire is both to hold up the power of Religion; and to keep up the credit of Religion; and therefore it is he herein exercises himself, both to keep a conscience void of guile in the sight of God, and a conversation void of offence in the sight of men. The Servants of Christ see that there are many eyes upon them, that will espy the least spot upon them, and therefore their care is, to keep themselves unsport of the World; to carry themselves so, that if it be possible the World may have nothing to spot them withall; they are sensible how obnoxious they are to the severe and rigid censures of the World, and that all the reproaches that fall on them, fall on the Lord and his Gospel: what an outcry is there in the World against those that fear God, as if they were bryars and thorns, the fire-brands of the World; and the troubles of Nations, that run the World upside down, as if there were no Lions in the world but Christs Lambs, as if Christs Sheep were all Wolves; and therefore to prevent this, and to put to silence the ignorance and malice of evil men, they endeavour as much as may be to gain upon the hearts, and to get the good opinion of all men; to walk so, that they may not only profit, but please others, and render the Gospel the more lovely with them; they would not only wrong no man, defraud no man, pro-
vokes

to no man; but they would *displease no man*; give no many any occasion of offence or dislike at them and their way; Sinners, as much as the poor Saints, are cryed out against for troublefom and inquiet; yet they are desirous rather to please than provoke you; they would please all the world as far as they may without hurting themselves or them: indeed they would not sin against God to please men: they would not wound their consciences to save their credits; they would not lye, nor dissemble, nor flatter, nor connive at you, nor comply with you in sin to gain your good will, but as far as they can, in order to your good, they are willing to become *all things to all men*; let them alone but to do their duty to God, to your and their own Souls; and if that do not displease you, they are willing in all things to do their best that they may not offend you.

And thus have I given you the description of these men by the exactnesse of their walking according to the *Scriptures*, which stands in their endeavour, to have respect to *every command*, to the most *inward and spiritual part* of every Command, and to observe every command to the *utmost*; to this I shall add two things.

First. When they have done all that they can, after care and circumspection, they will acknowledge themselves *unprofitable Servants*; they are *thankful*, and blesse God for helping them on in his way; but yet they are *humble*, they are so far from boasting that they have done so much, that they are ashamed that they have done no more: Whilst they admire the Grace of God towards them, they abase and *abhor themselves in dust and ashes*, Cor. 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they*

they all, yet not I, (no thanks to me) but to the
 Grace of God that was with me: Some comforta-
 ble difference there hath been (blessed be God) be-
 twix my Conversation, and the wayes of many
 others; but, *who hath made me to differ from ano-*
ther? or what have I, that I have not received? and
 if I have received it, why should I boast, as if I
 received it not? Something through the Grace
 of God hath been done, some service hath been
 performed; but what's all this to what I might
 have done? what's all this I have done, to what
 I have left undone? How small is my service, if
 it be compared with my sins? How few are
 my duties, if compared with my neglects? What's
 all I have done for God, to what I owe to the
 Lord, to that which he hath done for me *who hath*
redeemed my life from death, and crowned me with
loving kindnesse? But oh! What's all I have done,
 to what God hath promised to do for me? What
have I done to my Reward? What's my Race
 to my Crown? Such humbling self-abasing thoughts
 as these do Christians exercise themselves in, to lay
 them low, even in the dust before the Lord. The
 profane World brand them for a proud Genera-
 tion, who say to their Brethren, *Stand aside,*
we are holier than you. What more common in such
 mouths, precise, but as proud as the Devil? It is
 true, and Christians will freely acknowledge it, and
 take the shame of it upon them, that this pestilent
 Evil, *Pride*, is a weed that is apt to spring up in
 the richest Gardens; we can hardly be lifted up in
 an holy course, but we are apt to be puffed up with
 vain conceit, we can hardly do well, but we are
 to think too well of *what we do*, many a precious Chi-

man; hath groined and travelled in pain, under the bondage of a self-exalting heart; but yet he bewailing it, and bemoaning himself for it; yea, his very disease helps on to a cure; his pride is a means to humble him; his being lifted up above measure, is the very *thorn in his flesh* that brings him low; he abhors himself the more, and abaseth himself the lower, for that he hath exalted himself so high; and the constant desire, and labour of his Soul is, to bring himself to, and hold himself in such lowliness of heart and life, that whatever he be, or hath done, *the excellency of the power may appert to be of God, and not of him.*

2. Whatever they have done, they dare not trust upon it, or be found in it; they dare not be found in their own righteousness; but count all things, nothing so that they may *win Christ and be found in him.* They labour as zealously in the works of righteousness; as they would have done, if this must have been their righteousness; in which they must have stood before the Lord; and yet they depend as singly upon Christ, and his righteousness, as if they had never done any thing.

Before I proceed any further, let us a little consider, what it is of all this which hath been spoken of these men, *wherein their folly lies*; are they fools for making so wise a choice; for choosing the better part; those true riches; that enduring substance; those everlasting Treasures, which are laid up in another world; that they will not be cheated, nor be beguiled by the Devil of that better inheritance, by those toys and fooleries, the pleasures, honours, and other vanities of this present world? that is, *are they fools that they are not*
D. *brutes?*

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better? Are they fools that they have taken the
right way, to the obtaining and possessing that blef-
sedshe which they have chosen; that they do not
content themselves with idle wishings, and hoping
for that Heaven, and promise to themselves; they
shall not fail of it, though they never take that
course that leads to it? that is, are they fools, that
they *begin*? and will hearken to their reasons and
understandings, which tell them, that the end can-
not be attained without the means? Are they fools
that they will be upright, that they will not lye,
nor swear, nor curse, nor drink, nor riot, nor de-
fraud, nor oppress, but are willing to walk in all the
commandments of the Lord blameless? that is, are they fools,
that they are honest men? Is this their folly, that
they will not content themselves with a formal
outside Religion, with outward Reformation, but
will take care of the heart and inside, as well as the
outside; will perform spiritual duties, purge them-
selves from spiritual wickedness; will make sure
work, by laying the Axe to the root of that wick-
edness, which breaks forth in their lives, those
lusts that war in their members? that is, are they
fools, that they are not Hypocrites? Is this their folly,
that are so free, and forward, and zealous in
that which is good? that is, are they fools, that they
will love God so much, and fear God so much, and
go on so far, and so fast in obedience to him,
their hearts, the vigour of their affections, and
care, and labour, to the Devil and their lusts, and
reserve only some little for God and their Souls?
Are they fools that they will be so wary, and
watchful against sin, and temptations to it, that they
will keep themselves so far out of danger as may be

that is, Is it *their folly* that they are not fools? Stand forth ye wise men of the World, that charge the Saints with folly; read over all the particulars of that true description I have given you of them; and tell us in good earnest, if you can, in which of the particulars their folly lies; is it that they are not brutes; that they are men, that they are honest men, that they are not hypocrites, or that they are not fools; that you account them such? Men are fools that they are so precise; 'tis all one, as if you should say, if they were wise, they would be brutes, knaves, and fools: Behold here the wisdom of this World, Hath not God made the wisdom of the World foolishness?

Thus we have seen, what this exact and upright walking is, as it respects the Commandment; Now shall we consider it.

2. As it respects Conscience; And thus I shall give this double description of their circumspect Christians.

1. They take great care of Conscience.

2. They give good heed to Conscience.

1. They take great care of Conscience, and take great pains about their Conscience. Their care they take is twofold:

2. About the informing and instructing Conscience.

2. About the keeping Conscience tender.

1. They take great care about the informing and instructing their Consciences; Conscience is to be made the *inward guide* of their way. As the word is to be their guide without them, so Conscience is to be their *inward guide*. Their care therefore is, that it may not be a *blind guide*. Hence it is that they are so much in searching and studying the

the Scriptures: they are much conversant in their Bibles, they are observed to be frequent in hearing Sermons, diligent in Nothing, and Repeating what they hear; are often putting their doubts, and opening their difficult cases, to those that are able to resolve them, and all this to get their Consciences enlightened, and instructed in the will of God: Though there are many things that they are ignorant of, yet there is nothing that they are willingly ignorant of, their desires and prayers to the Lord, are the same with the Psalmist, Psal. 119. 19. *Hide not thy Commandments from me: and with Elihu in Job, What I know not, teach thou me.*

2. They take great care to keep their consciences tender: Tenderness of conscience, is sometimes taken for weakness of conscience; a weak conscience, is that which is both weak-sighted, and is not able to discern between things that differ, but is very subject to mistakes, it mistakes good for evil, lawful for unlawful, and its also full of troublesome and unreasonable fears, and endless scruples, which, as the crudities abounding in a weak stomach, do make it keck and rise, not only at that which is hurtful; but sometimes at that which is wholesome enough, it often fears, where no fear is; this tenderness their endeavours are to cure, and not to cherish. True tenderness of conscience is the perfection of it, a truly tender conscience is a sound conscience, which is quick of sense, and presently feels, and smarts, and is put to pain with any thing that is really an offence to it. A tender conscience is as the eye, the least dust that's blown into it, will make it smart and this not from soreness, but wickedness of sense. The dim-lighted world look upon all tenderness

as weakness, and count all such, whose consciences cannot down with any thing, as a company of sickly, weakly, brain-sick spirits; and all their Doubtings and Dissatisfactions, to be humor and conceit, and peevishness, and causeless fears; but this tenderness is so far from being the sickness, that it is the health and soundness of the heart; it was the commendation, and not the reproach of King Josiah. 2 King. 22. 19. *That his heart was tender.* These temper circumpect Christians are very chary of keeping their hearts in; and therefore any thing that would brawn or harden them, they carefully shun; as the eye that cannot endure the dust that falls into it, is quick at its ward, to keep off any thing that would be noxious to it; and this is the reason why Christians can bear any thing rather than sin, because it's this alone that's hurtful to conscience; they are hardy enough to bear afflictions, these are no prejudice to conscience; it is not against their consciences to suffer, but it is to sin; affliction may perplex the thoughts, and too much disquiet and distemper the passions, but will never trouble conscience.

Object. Tender Consciences! Who more stubborn and peremptory, and obstinate, and stiffe in their way than these? Do you call this tenderness?

Sol. There is a threefold stiffness: Manifested.

1. In a refusing to receive conviction, concerning any thing wherein they are faulty, or in an error.

2. In a refusing to revoke their errors, upon

conviction that they are in a fault; let either of these be charged upon them, and let the charge be made good, and then call them stubborn, obstinate, or what you will.

2. In a refusing to act contrary to their conviction, to do that which Conscience is not satisfied in; which, after their most free & fair debate, most candid enquiring into, and most impartial weighing, all that is or can be said for it, their conscience still tells them, they should sin in doing it: Hereupon, though all their Friends should come and perswade, and entice them; though all their Adversaries should fall a scoffing and reproaching them, a threatening & persecuting them, yet still they refuse to yield. This stiffness is that stedfastness which the Lord requires in them, and is so far from being inconsistent with true tenderness, that it is their tenderness.

If an Idolater should come and perswade such to worship an Idol, if he should threaten them with the fiery furnace, with the Lions Den, and yet they will not, is this their stubbornness? Or, is it not their tenderness? If an Adulterer should perswade them to uncleanness; If a Libertine should come and think to snuff them out of their strict & holy course, or to tempt them but to some little indulgence to their flesh, in some such way as this; Why? What hurt is there in a little mirth? What great matter is it, to take a little liberty now and then? Why should you think your selves wiser than other men, & yet they will not hearken? will you call this their obstinacy, or their tenderness? Here be obstinate creatures indeed; they will not be Idolaters, they will not be unclean, they will not be Libertines, they will not be liars, nor dissemblers, they will by no means be perswaded to rebel against God and Conscience, and therefore they

they be obstinate. Perswade them to that which is good, convince them that they are in an error, and then try whether they will be obstinate: tell them, *Friends, you walk disorderly, unchristianly; you are uncharitable, censorious, contentious, proud, vain,* and convince them of it, and see if they will not hearken to you, & thank you for your admonition.

Christians, prove your selves to be conscientious by your tenderness, however the World go about to blast and reproach you with your consciences, and call your uprightness hypocrisie, your tenderness obstinacy, yet part not with it so, but still resolve with *Job, chap. 27. Till I dye, I will not remove my integrity from me.* There is a double way wherein we may be said to remove our integrity.

1. By departing from it.

2. By belying it.

1. By departing from our integrity, by turning aside to iniquity, by being found false to God and conscience, and by a liberty in sinning, exchanging this truth & tenderness of heart for hardness & hypocrisie. Take heed you do not thus depart from your integrity. Beloved, you live in a world wherein conscience is like to cost you dear; if you will own any such thing as conscience, or conscientious walking, you are like to smart for it. Look to it that your conscience be sound, such as is worth the suffering for; do not suffer for the name of conscience, or conscientious, but for the thing: look to it, that whatsoever you suffer for conscience, you suffer nothing from conscience; for your wronging, or abusing, or violating of it. Sufferings for conscience, for an upright conscience, are precious; Sufferings from conscience, from an evil and abused conscience, will be bitter. Let all the world be against you rather than conscience: whom

the world smites for conscience God will *bless*, whom the world judges God will justify: but if our hearts condemn us, who shall plead for us, or comfort us? Carry your selves so, that conscience may be your comforter, not your tormentor: There is no torment like the stings and revenges of an abused conscience. Keep your consciences tender, and they will neither hurt you, nor suffer you to be hurt by others: keep your integrity, and it will keep you. The Psalmist prayes, *Pf. 25. 21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.* Let me not think to shift my self of trouble, by sheltering my self under sin; let me not go about to make my peace with my troublesome adversaries, by casting in my lot with them; let me never think to be beholding to iniquity for my safety; *let integrity preserve me.* Preserve thou me in mine integrity, and let it preserve me. Christians, give the world leave to talk and do what they will, but when they have said and done their worst, *keep you honest, and you shall keep you safe*: Your consciences will be your confidence, and your security; *He that walketh uprightly shall walk sure.* Be not reproached out of your refuge, let not the world find you obstinate against your duty, nor yet yielding to iniquity; be not stubborn, but yet be stedfast, yield to reproof while you slight reproaches.

Let us be so gentle, flexible, easie to be entreated, so fearful to offend, so ready to please all men, in all things, which are not against conscience, its peace & purity, that we may convince them, that in those things wherein we fix and do not yield, it is because we cannot, not because we *will not*, and let us yet be so stedfast in those things which would be a wound & defilement to conscience, that we may let them see it is but a vain attempt for them to think to reproach

or persecute us out of our integrity: let us be sincerely tender, not out of any sickness or weakness of conscience, or from groundless scrupulosity, much less from sullenness or humor, but from a sound mind and pure conscience.

Let us be universally tender of every evil, not only of the greatest and most scandalous, but of the smallest sins, not only of open sins, such as come to the view of men, but of the most secret sins, the most inward and spiritual wickedness, such as need fear no reprover but conscience; let us be tender, not only of committing sin, but of any omissions or neglects; not only of our neglects of duties, but our negligences in duties, and that deadness, formality, cursorness, coldness, hypocrisy, distractions which hence arise; of the neglects or negligent performances of our duty to God, of our duty to men, to our families, to our friends, to our enemies; our not pitying them, nor praying for them, nor wishing them well, not doing them good for their evil, &c. endeavouring by our soft, meek, inoffensive and loving carriage towards them, to win and gain upon their hearts. Oh Brethren, we have much to blame our selves for, though evil men have little, or if they have more, they are so unhappy as not to hit upon the right, judging us to be condemning us, not for our faults, but for the good that is found in us. But however, we have much to blame our selves for, the Lord help us, we have many haltings, and many failings. Oh it were well for us if our hearts had no more to say against us than men can say; what unevenness and inequality is there in our goings? what intermissions of our care and watchfulness? what ever our aims and desires are, what an universal regard soever we have to the will of God, yet when we come to practice, in how many

many things do we go awry? It may be we dare not wholly neglect a duty, nor a praying season, nor a hearing season, but our hearts will presently be upon us and smite us for it; but are we not often remiss and negligent in our duties, and go out with it without any trouble? may be we take some care in the matters of our own souls, but what do we for our families, our friends and acquaintance? may be we dare not conform to evil men, nor have fellowship with them in their evil wayes, but do we not *connive* at them? may be we do not *render evil for evil*, railing for railing, but do we *good for evil*, do we pity them, pray for them, & labour by all lawful means to gain upon their hearts? may be we dare not be *unrighteous* or unjust in our dealings; but are we not unmerciful, unpeaceable, unquiet? we dare not lye, nor swear, or curse, but are we so *watchful*, as we should be against idle and vain talkings, frothy & unfavoury discourses? may be we cannot suffer any rooted malice to abide in our hearts, but are there not many sudden and furious fits of passion & anger breaking forth, much bitter & provoking language? are we not fretful and impatient, without ever laying it much to heart? doth conscience check us for, and make resistance against every evil? Let us be universally tender, universally careful. Oh that our consciences were but as tender as our *lusts*; our *pride* will not bear any thing that reflects upon our *reputation*, our covetousness will not bear any thing that is an *hindrance* to our *gains*; our passions, will hardly bear the least cross or displeasing word; how touchy are we at every little thing that does offend us? Oh if conscience were in every thing as tender as lust, what Christians should we be! but woe to us, whatever we should be, how short do we fall; how unequal are our goings? how

how *unsteady* are our *tempers*? sometimes *tender*, sometimes *hard*, sometimes *watchful*, sometimes *heedless*, in some things *careful*, in some things *careless*; how do we too much *justify* the wicked, & *harden* them against their *reproaches* of us? Let us *press* on with so much *earnestness* to this *evenness* & *exactness* in all our ways, that it may be seen, that however we have not yet attained; yet we are following after, though we have not reached to, yet we are *reaching* towards it, though through *infirmity* we fall into many *infirmities*, yet we allow not to our selves a liberty in any; such a conscience as this, such a course as this will plead for its self, against all the calumnies of the World.

2. By belying *your integrity*; that is the sense in which *Job* speaks in the fore-mentioned *Scripture*, I will not remove my integrity; that is, I will never belye my integrity: call you me an hypocrite, or what else you please, God forbid that I should justify you by belying my self, & saying as you say. Brethren, do not be moved of any base fear, or to make your peace with sinners, do not say of your tenderness, & *watchful* walking, this was my *pride*, or my *hypocrisie*, or my *humor*, or my self-will, but stand upon your own uprightnes, I dye I will hold fast my righteousness & will not let mine heart shall not reproach me while I live, v. 6.

3. They give great heed to conscience, they will hearken to, & follow conscience; the voice of a well instructed conscience is the voice of God, & to this voice they will hearken, without turning aside in any thing, either to the right hand or the left. By turning aside to the right hand, I mean the same which *Solomon* speaks, by being righteous overmuch, *Eccles.* 7. 16. Be not righteous overmuch, the imposing upon our selves such strictness, and those severities which God hath not

not imposed, the making those things to be sins, which God hath not made to be sins, and hereby making the *narrow way* narrower than the Lord hath made it: and this may be *done*.

1. By putting Religion in such things in which God hath put none, laying other bonds and burdens on our necks, then those which the Holy Ghost hath laid on us: the abridging and cutting our selves short of that Christian liberty, which the Lord hath not only allowed, but commanded us to maintain and stand fast in.

2. By putting more Religion in any thing than God hath put in it, by laying a greater weight and stress upon the lesser and smaller things of Religion than God hath layed on them. By the lesser duties of Religion, I mean not any *moral duties*: the lowest of those, the lowest duties of mercy, justice, charity, truth, &c. are to be reckoned among the *weighty matters of the law*, wherein we cannot erre by being too strict: we cannot be too just, or too true, or too merciful, nor too zealous for truth, justice and mercy. *Mat. 5. 19. He that breaketh the least of these Commandments, and teacheth them so, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven:* but by the lesser things of Religion, I mean the circumstantial of worship of God, the outward forms of worship, the gestures, &c. to be used in it. This is a being rigorous overmuch, to put more in these circumstantial than the Scripture hath put, to be so zealous for them, as if Religion stood or fell with them. *1 Cor. 7. 19. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping the Commandments of God:* some there were that did hotly contend for Circumcision, and did put much of their Religion in that; others were as hot against it, & this was much of their

their Religion, both these the Apostle checks, telling them that *circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing*; these are not the things wherein Religion stands; keep the *Commandment*, fear God, walk before God in *holiness and righteousness*; let your zeal be spent that way, but trouble not your selves so much about these *lesser matters*. Yet two things must here be added.

1. This is not so to be understood, as if Christians were to *swallow* all things of this nature without examining whether they be agreeable to the Word of God or not, a due regard must be had to the satisfying of *Conscience* even in the smallest things; we may not wilfully to practise any little things which are against our *Consciences*, though we may not spend our zeal about them, as if Religion lived or died with them.

2. Even against these lesser things there ought to be a zeal expressed, if they should be like to prove destructive to the substantial of Religion, and hinder the main end which they pretend to promote; by this appears what I mean by turning aside to the right hand, or being righteous over-much.

By turning aside to the *left hand*, I mean the same which Solomon there doth, by being *wicked overmuch*, *neither be thou wicked overmuch*. This is not to be understood, as if there were any wickedness which is not too much, a little is too much; it checks and retains all liberty to sin, though in many things we may fall, yet let not sin get the head of thee, keep it under, keep it down as much as is possible, least it grow to that height that it prove thy speedy ruine; by turning aside therefore to the left hand, understanding all declinings to licentiousness; Either,

1. By making duties no duties, making sins to be no sins, and so making the way of life broader than Christ hath made it; and stretching our liberty beyond

yond our line, as turning aside to the right hand; stands in the infringing of our liberty, in imposing such burthens, which God hath not imposed; or turning to the left hand; stands in taking up a liberty which God hath imposed; making it no matter of Conscience to be strict, not only in the Circumstantials, but neither in the Substantials of Religion; so blinding Conscience, and bribing it over to side with lust, that it accounts it not a duty, to be so strict and so precise in any thing, but that there may be a greater latitude allowed, and a remitting of our care and zeal, especially in cases of any hazard or danger, that our zeal and strictness is like to cost us.

2. Making bold with duties and sins, neglecting known duties, running upon known sins, making shipwreck of Conscience to satisfy lust; where though Conscience stands convinced, that holiness in the strictness of it, is our duty; and that licentiousness, and living after the flesh, is our sin; yet we will indulge to our selves, our fleshly liberty.

Now this is another Character of circumspet Christians, they will walk according to conscience in all things, without turning aside either way, either to the right hand, or the left; they are not willing to turn aside to the right hand, either by putting Religion in those things in which God hath put none, or by putting more of Religion in any thing, than God hath put in it; their zeal is for the substantials and weighty things of Religion; as for the circumstantials, though they will not act in these contrary to Conscience, yet they list not to be contentious about them, nor censorious of those, who agreeing in the main, do differ in these things from them.

But their great care is not to turn aside to the left hand; they will not for fear of being too precise, grow profuse and profane; but as the Apostle, Hebr. 13. 18. *They have a good Conscience, willing to live honestly in all things; endeavouring to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present evil World, being holy and harmless, the children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked generation.*

III. From this way they will not be withdrawn, either by any hopes or advantages on the one hand, or, by any fears or dangers on the other; they have not taken up Religion on such slight grounds, as to be either flattered, or frightened out of it. Christians, at their first engaging in the way of the Lord, do sit down and consider, what it will cost them to be Christ's Disciples; they count all the charges, they cast up all the damages that they can be subject to, before-hand; and fore-see, that there is enough in Christ to make amends for all, and to leave them harmless at the last, whatever falls. They count upon tribulations, losses, reproaches, and the greatest of temptations; and if they did not fore-see, that the gain of Godliness would countervail all the losses and inconveniences it's like to be attended with, they would not have adventured on it; but seeing for a certainty they can be no losers, hereupon they set up their staffe, determining not to depart for ever. They take Christ and his wayes for better for worse, for richer for poorer; in prosperity and affliction; they resolve to stand or fall, to suffer and reign, to live and dye with him. They promise to him, as Ruth to Naomi, Ruth 1. 14. *As the Lord liveth I will not leave thee; whithersoever thou goest I will go, where*

where thou lodgest I will lodge: They will take their Lot with Christ where ever it falls; Christ hath said to them, *I will never forsake you*, Heb. 13. 15. and they have said the like to him; he that hath not thus engaged, is no true Christian; this absolute resolution to be ever the Lord's; never to forsake him, is of the essence of true conversion; he is no true Convert, that is content to follow Christ in fair weather only, as far and as long as he safely may; a sincere Convert will follow Christ absolutely and unalterably. Now, being thus engaged, whatever befalls them, it is no more than they looked for; they are called fools, and counted stubborn, and refractory, self-will'd, self-conceited; and they looked to be counted such, and so it moves them not: they are set upon by flatteries, and tempted by outward prosperity; but it cannot prevail, *Thy money perish with thee*, says Peter, *Germanus illa bestia non curat pecuniam*: 'Twas said of Luther, Money will do nothing with them, Preferment will do nothing with them, Prisons, Banishment, Death it self can do nothing with them; *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me; so that I may finish my course with joy*, Act. 20. 24.

And as they will not be drawn to a total Apostasy from Christ, so neither will they be brought to allow themselves in any little deviation, Psal. 42. 17, 18. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant, our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined thy way*: in what case they were, you may see in the foregoing part of the Psalm; *Thou hast cast us off, thou makest us to turn our backs upon our Enemies, and they that hate us; they shall say of them*

ourselves; thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us, &c. Though all this be come upon us, yet have we not, &c. Our hearts are not turned back: We do not repent of our choice; we do not wish our selves back amongst the prosperous world; we think never the worse of the Lord, or his way; we have as good a will to the Lord, high an esteem of his waies, as ever we had before we were thus afflicted; there's not the least abatement of our love and affection; If we were now to begin again, if we were now to choose whom we would serve, and know as much as we do now, we should make the same choice; our heart runs out the same way, and in the same strength that ever it did; those many waters that have run upon us, have neither quenched; no, not so much as cool'd our love; neither have our steps declined from thy way: We have neither been turn'd back in our affection, nor turn'd aside in our practise; through the grace of God our hearts have been kept upright, and we have made strait steps to our feet, Dan. 6. 10. We read, that when a Decree was made, That whosoever should ask any Petition for thirty days space, either of God or man, save of the King, should be cast into the Lions Den; Yet Daniel would not forbear to pray to his God; When he knew that the Writing was signed, he went into his house, and his Windows being open in his Chamber, he kneeled upon his knee Three times a day; and Prayed, &c. Carnal men would have been ready to have said, What a precise Fool was this Daniel? What great matter was it, that he stood so much upon? it was not the committing a sin that he was urged to, but only the forbearance of a Duty; he was not required to fall down before an Image, as the three Childeen were, or to worship any false God; but to forbear, for a

time, to pray to the true God : If it had been the worshipping before an Image that had been required, some would have reason'd thus; Why, what great matter had that been, to bow in the house of Rimmon, to bow before an Image, or an Altar, this is not praying to them? There is a great difference betwixt worshipping an Image, & worshipping God before an Image; What is there in all this? But this, which Daniel stands upon, hath not so foul a face; 'twas only the forbearance of his duty to God, and that only for a time. Was this such a crime to forbear praying for a few weeks, for the saving of his life? Or, if he would needs pray, he might have done it secretly, and kept his devotion to himself; Must he needs keep his hours, and open his windows too? Yea, he must do it, and he will do it: Daniel would not only continue his course of Prayer, but he would not give his Adversaries occasion to think, that he was afraid to pray; he held it his duty (being called out to a confession of his Religion) to let his Adversaries know, that he had not such a slight and low esteem of it, that he was afraid to trust his God with his safety, whilest he continued in the exercise of his duty. It's true, that in matters circumstantial, such, wherein there may be variation without prejudice to the substantials of Godliness, such which are not against their consciences, which they may submit to without sinning against God; here they are not stiff, nor refractory, but for peace sake, & in order to the gaining upon the hearts of others, they are willing, with the Apostle, 1 Cor. 9. 20. *To become all things to all men, in such things wherein they can satisfie themselves, they are willing, as far as may be, to gratifie the minds of others.*

But for the Substantials of Religion, the matters of

of Faith, the matters of Righteousness and Holiness, the worshipping of God in Spirit and Truth, according to his own Ordinances and Institutions, or any thing else of the same import with these; here they are resolved, whatever come upon them, or become of them, not to relinquish, or be drawn aside from them, by any solicitations whatsoever; they must obey God, rather than men; they must follow God, though therein they forsake, and provoke all the world: In matters which God hath left to their liberty, they are willing to use their liberty, according as it may be behooveful for the Gospel. In matters that concern their personal interest, as men, they list not, they ought not to be contentious; spare them but the liberty to keep a good conscience, give them leave to fear God, and worship God; give them leave to be holy and righteous, and to walk before the Lord in their integrity; and for any thing else, you may perswade them to it with ease: But, if you entice them away from their God, or impose upon them, to the prejudice of a good conscience, you were as good spare you labour, speak no more to them in such matters, they are at a point, God they will follow, a good Conscience they will maintain whatever come on them, to the end of their days.

Thus I have given you a description of the Scripture-Precisians, which is summarily this; They are the same with sincere Goly men, men fearing God, who are inwardly renewed after the Image of God, who are adventurers for another world; are gotten into the way of life, and are walking on carefully & heedfully in that way, whose aim and endeavour is to live, not according to the wills & lusts of men, but according to the Word and Will of God; not according to honour and fancy, but according to consci-

ence. A people that will neither make the way to Heaven narrower than 'tis, by being scrupulous and nice, where God hath given them liberty; nor will make it broader than 'tis, by taking up looser principles, or allowing themselves in loose Practices. A People that dare not *adventure* their souls upon that easie, formal; careless, outward way of Religion, that the most do, but are willing to make sure work, by walking to the exactness of their Rule, and living up to the height of their Principles; and who in this holy course, are stedfast & unmoveable, will neither be bribed off by the Flatteries, nor beaten off, by the Frowns of the world, but will retain their integrity, hold fast their holy Profession, and hold on in their holy course, and this to the death.

Concerning these men, I shall now prove, and make evident to the Consciences of all impartial Persons, in the second place, That they are no fools, but truly Wise men.

In order hereto, I must first discover what's meant by Fools; A Fool is a man void of understanding (we are not now discoursing of natural Fools, but of those that are such upon a moral account) a man void of true wisdom. Wisdom is of Two sorts:

1. *Fleshly Wisdom*, a Carnal Policy; which consists in an understanding where the interest of the flesh lies, & in the ordering & managing of our selves, and our affairs so, that we may advance and secure this interest. By the interest of the flesh, I mean, all those things which please and gratifie the flesh, and wherewith the fleshly minds of men are most delighted, and place their content & happiness in; as outward peace and quiet, outward ease & security, outward plenty & prosperity, outward credit and reputati-

tion; he that can order his affairs, and steer his course, so as will most advance, and best secure these his outward concernments, that which way soever the world go, he may live in peace, and quiet, & credit, and plenty, and pleasure, this is a fleshly wise man. Concerning this wisdom, the question is not, in this it will easily be granted, *That the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light*, can make a better shift to live in the world, to keep themselves whole in all changes and casualties, the Apostle disclaims this wisdom, 1 Cor. 1. 12, we had our conversation in the world, *not in fleshly wisdom, but in the Grace of God, and in simplicity and godly sincerity.*

2. Spiritual wisdom, which consists, 1. in the understanding, where our main interest lies, which is not in things temporal, meat, & drink, and cloaths, & money, and house, & lands, and pleasure, and honours; but in things Spiritual, in the love & favour of God, in a good Conscience, in Righteousness, Peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and in things eternal, in that Glory, Honour, and Immortality, which shall be given of God. 2. In ordering our selves and waies so, as to make the best provision for securing of this our great & eternal interest, that whatever miscarriages there may be in things of lower value and least durance, that wherein our eternal happiness stands, may be secured to us; this is called in Scripture, *The wisdom which is from above*, wisdom to Salvation; and this is the only true Wisdom. God hath made and will make all fleshly wisdom appear to be folly; concerning this true Wisdom, this Spiritual Wisdom it is, that I shall now make good, That circumspect precise Christians are no fools, but the only wise men, and that from these Reasons:

E*3.

1. God

1. God accounts them no fools.
2. They will not be counted fools at last, neither by God nor men.
3. The properties of wise men are found in them.
4. The Treasures of Wisdom are found with them.

Reas. 1. God counts them no fools; they are no fools upon a true account, whom the world counts fools, but they only are such whom God counts fools; as the Apostle, 2 Cor. 10. *Not he that commends himself is approved, but he whom the Lord commends*; so not he that condemneth himself, or is condemned of men for folly or simplicity is disapproved; but whom God condemneth. Beloved, whose judgment will you take? will you stand to the judgment of God in this case? His judgement we have plain, Job. 28. 28. *Unto man he said, the fear of the Lord, this is wisdom; and to depart from evil, this is understanding*, Ps. 211. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his Commandments. The [beginning] of wisdom, that notes, either, 1. The entrance of Wisdom; men never begin to be wise till they come to be godly. Look how long thou hast lived a stranger from God, in a carnal unconverted state, so long thou livedst a fool; thou never camest near the threshold of true wisdom till thou learnedst the fear of the Lord. When the repenting Prodigal came to his Father, he came to himself, his understanding returned to him; he was besides himself before, but then he came to himself. 2. The*
top

top or height of Wisdom; *Caput sapientie*, the word signifies a godly man, for true wisdom is the head, and not the tail; excellent wisdom is found in him. In these, and multitudes of other Scriptures, you have the judgment of God concerning these men. God is infinite in wisdom, and knows all things and persons what they are, and God is true, and all things, and persons are certainly what he sayes they are, Are you wiser than he? Will you believe your own conceits and apprehensions before the word of the All-wise and true God? Either you must make sinners fools, or God a lyar.

Reas. 2. They will be accounted no fools at last, neither by God nor men: They only are to be accounted fools now, that will be accounted such at last; at present mens eyes are blinded, they cannot discern, betwixt light and darkness, betwixt wisdom and folly, and so are subject to great mistakes, but at last mens eyes shall be opened, this blind world shall then see, and look upon all the wayes and transactions of men here below, and all the various states and conditions of the several sorts of persons to the world, with another eye than now they do. When the designs and wayes, and actions of men shall be brought to their issue, when all vizards shall be pulled off, and all faces and hearts shall be made bare and naked, and open, then every one will see who have behaved themselves wisely, and who have plaitt the fool, 1 Cor. 3. 13. *Every mans work shall be made manifest*, and thereby every man shall be made manifest, the day shall declare them: If you ask, what day? I answer, the last day, when

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every

every man shall have finished his work; the day of Judgment, which is both a day of tryal, when all shall be proved and examined what they are, and a day of recompence, when every man shall be rewarded according to his work. Let this now determine the question; let those persons, who will be by both God and Men, by good men and evil men, accounted fools at that day, let them be accounted fools now, and let those men be accounted wise now, whom God and all the world will account such in that day of tryal. Now the world are divided in their judgments, some think Christians fools, others think them wise, but at last all the world shall be agreed, and of one minde, and those that shall be judged fools then, by the common judgement of all, let them pass for such now. But you will say, what is this to the satisfying our present judgment? how can we tell now, who shall then be accounted wise or fools? I answer, besides that the VVord is before you, which is the law by which that judgment must proceed, from which you may easily learn what Mens judgments shall be; besides this, let every man appeal to his own conscience. Here are two sorts of persons in the world, one sort are such as own God in the world, and follow God, and follow the Scripture, and withdraw themselves from the loose and vain wayes of the wicked, spending much of their time in praying, and hearing, and meditating of God, exercising themselves in holy watchfulness over their hearts and all their wayes; labouring in all things; that both here and hereafter they may be accepted and approved of God. The other sort live at their ease and their pleasure, minde their Farms, and Oxen, and

and bellies ; hope they shall do well enough hereafter, but do not much trouble themselves, nor take any care or pains about it. Let every man ask his own heart; thus, Which of these two sorts do I think in my conscience will be found fools, and which wise in the day of Judgment? Beloved, will you speak your consciences in this thing? if it were put to your choice amongst which of these two sorts you would be found, and take your portion at last; what choice do you think you should make, whether would you be found amongst those that spend their dayes in ignorance, or those that seek after the knowledge of God? amongst those that labour and strive to make sure the love and favour of God, or amongst those that take no care about it, but leave it at uncertainties? Amongst the vain or the serious, the diligent or the sloathful, the heavenly minded or the earthly minded? Dare any of you say, let my soul stand amongst the drunkards, and gluttons, and gallants, and good-fellows; among the covetous and proud, and loose, and careless ones of the earth? Among the formalists, the mockers and scoffers at the pure wayes of the Lord: let my portion be with them, my place be with them; let my sentence be according to their sentence: If you dare not make this your choice or desire, to be found amongst such at that day, you thereby may perceive what the verdict of your own conscience is in this case; whatever you say of them now, your conscience tells you, that these will be found the only fools in that day, and those only wise, amongst whom you would choose to stand.

Reas. 3. The properties of wise men are found in them,
I shall instance but in two.

1. They understand themselves aright,
2. They build sure.

1. They understand themselves aright, for,
1. They understand wherein their *interest* lies; we say of a wise Man, he is a Man that understands himself, that understands what he hath to do: Christians are men of understanding, they understand what that one thing is for which they live, in the pursuit and security whereof, if they prosper, they know they shall be happy, whatever else they miscarry in; and upon their miscarriage, wherein they know they are undone whatever else they prosper in; they know there is but one thing needful, and that that one thing is their eternal interest, the blessedness to come, the happiness of the other world, the obtaining and enjoying of God; for the portion of their Souls; be thou mine, and I have what I look for, either in Heaven or Earth. *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and in Earth there is none that I desire in comparison of thee. Psal. 4. 6. There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Psal. 27. 4. One thing have I desired. Phil. 3. 13. This one thing I do.* Christians have but one thing wherein they are concerned, God is all they have to regard, this one thing they have in their eyes, they see before them where their happiness lies; and they are able to say, Whom have I? or what have I?

but thee? This one thing is in their hearts; one thing have I desired, That I may dwell in the House of the Lord for ever; and this one thing is in their hand too, the work and the business they mind to carry on. *This one thing I do, forgetting that which is behind, and reaching forth to that which is before; I press to the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Sinners, you that take your selves to be so wise, you are a company of poor mistaken Creatures, mistaken in your interest, you are in the world, you know not for what, you know not what you have to do here, you are those men, upon whom God is said, Psal. 14. *To look down from Heaven, to see if there were any among them that did understand and seek God. (That did understand)* that is, that knew that their great business they had here to do, and their only happiness which they had to seek, lay in God, and that thereupon applyed themselves to the seeking of God; but behold, they were all out of the way, there were none amongst them that understand this, that this was their great concernment, and thereupon they were all out of the way, quite off from that work that they were sent thither about? it is no wonder you shoot so wide, when you mistake your mark: it is no wonder you do you know not what, when you know not what you should do: Is this the work you came into the World for, to Eat, and Drink, and Sleep, and Buy, and Sell, and Marry, and bring forth Children, and load your selves and them with burdens of thick Clay; to Sport, and Play, and Riot, and Laugh, and spend your dayes in meer Vanity and Foolery; are there no higher things than these, which God hath set before you, and
more

more worthy your choice and labour? Have you no Souls to mind that are of an immortal being? and are there not lasting Riches, abiding Pleasures, an enduring substance that may be had, that must be had for these souls of yours to live upon, or else they will be eternally miserable? and do you not understand that your souls are of more value than your perishing Carkasses; and that the making provision for your souls, is of far higher consequence than the pampering of your bodies? Will the loss of your souls be recompenced by all your bodily pleasures and plenty? Will not the saving your souls, ballance and make amends for any losses, crosses, miscarriages in your fleshly interest? If you do not understand this, yet do not judge them fools that do.

2. They understand their way, *Prov. 14. 8. The wisdom of the prudent, is to understand his way.* The wisdom of a Merchant lies, not only in his skill, to choose and deal in the right and richest commodities, which will bring in the greatest, and most certain gain; but in his understanding the mystery of his Trade, whereby he may upon the best and surest terms, procure these commodities, to know the best way of dealing and traffiquing for them: Christians, by their being acquainted with the Scriptures, and having been trained up in the School of Christ, are come to understand their Trade, the mystery of godliness; they have not only learn'd to prize the salvation of God, and the glory and blessedness of the world to come, but are well acquainted with the way that leads to it: Carnal men are ignorant of the way, though they understand in general, that Religion is the way to salvation, yet poor miserable creatures, they mistake their
Reli-

Religion; any little smatterings of the knowledge of God, with some profession of Faith and Repentance, especially if it be joyned with some little outward devotion, now and then calling upon God for mercy; this they count Religion enough to bring them to Heaven, and any thing that's more than this, they think it more than needs; these are the fools indeed, if we may believe the Scripture, *Jer. 5. 4. Surely they are poor, they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord.* Sinners are wise enough in their own ways; the way of sin they know, the way of lying, and oppression, and unrighteousness, the way to health, and honour, and temporal preferments, they sufficiently know, they have studied and travelled these ways, and are well acquainted with them; but all this while they are foolish Children, *Surely they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord.* Christians are wise, and herein their wisdom stands, *they know the way of the Lord*; they have a light without them, shewing to them this good way; they have a voice behind them telling them, this is the way, walk in it; they have made it their business, to enquire and study, and travel this way; surely these are wise, they know the way of the Lord, they know their way to heaven; if they know not the way to be rich in this world, yet they know the way to be rich towards God; if they know not how to live honourably in the World, yet they know how to live honestly; if they know not how to please men, yet they know how to please God; if they cannot keep a fair correspondence with the World, yet they know how to keep a good conscience in the World; if they know not how to escape Trouble and Affliction, they know how to suffer it; if they know

know not how to escape the wrath of men, yet they know how to escape the wrath to come; if this be wisdom, to be skilled in the matters of Religion and Righteousness, in the matters of faith and a good conscience; to have found out the way of life, by which, to escape from hell beneath, then these godly men, are wise men; surely they are wise, they know the way of the Lord.

Objeſt. But you will say, Why may not we be in the right way as well as they? Why may not our way of Religion be as good a way, and as wise a way, and as safe a way as theirs?

Sol. Will you make use of your Reasons? if you will, you shall answer this Objection your selves; their Religion and yours, are not two wayes of Religion, but as to the principles of it, are but one and the same; the difference betwixt you and them, is this, you take up a little part of that Religion which you both profess, and you will have but a little to do with that little of Religion which you do take up; you little mind or study, or are exercised in that which you count your Religion; these precise ones, take up the whole of Religion, and they give themselves wholly to the study and practice of it; they make it their business to search the Scripture, that they may understand the will and way of the Lord, and to govern their hearts, and order their lives in all things according to it; So that now, if you will answer two easie questions, you shall thereby, be able your selves to answer the Objection; the first question is, *Who are most like to be in the right?* either these who endeavour to practise all that they profess, or those, who though they profess the truth, do practise scarce any thing of it; but a small part of it,

it, and that the lower, and less considerable part of it, the bare outside of it : This is no hard question, I hope you'll acknowledge to be resolved; and the second question shall be as easie; *Who is like to be in the right, the diligent Christian, that makes it his business to study his Religion, or the careless Christian, that seldom spends a serious thought about it?* Answer but these two questions, and then your selves will be able to give a reason, why it's more like they should be in the right than you. Brethren, shew your selves men, here are a company of poor creatures of you, who have spent your time in ignorance and idleness, as to the matters of God and your souls, who little meddle with that of Religion; which your selves say you must do if you will be saved; you say you must believe, you must repent of your sins, you must pray to God for forgiveness, and yet what great strangers are many of you from these things? It may be if you consider it, you have often gone whole daies and weeks together, and have scarcely ever prayed, no nor so much as after your own fashion; nor scarce had any thoughts of Repentance, or asking God forgiveness; you eat, and drink, and go forth, and come in, and lie down, and rise up, and never so much as look up to God for his mercy and blessings; these others in the meanwhile, make praying, and reading, and hearing, and minding God and their Souls, and eternal state, their daily study and business; now, what an unreasonable thing is it to imagine, that those who so little meddle with any Religion, or any thing of Religion, should be as like to understand it, as those that make it their daily work. Oh beloved, how can you be confident you are in the right, when you
never

never seriously enquire, whether you be or no, and how can you think you have any wisdom in you, when you trust a matter of such weight and importance upon a meer presumption ; you are strongly conceited that you are as wise as others, and in as good a case, and in as good a way ; and upon this conceit you venture your souls. Friends, you are a sad wonder to me, and I do so much wonder, that men should think, that carelesness is as good as diligence ; licentiousness, as good as strictness ; that, that loose, and blind, and easy way which men take up, is as good, and as sure, nay, a better, and more certain way of life, than the strict and industrious way of the despised Saints ; that I very much wonder, how men that believe, and know any thing of the Scriptures, can make themselves to think, that, that sottish, dull, lifelesse way, which they satisfie themselves in, can give any of them the least hopes of salvation.

2. They build sure, so that whosoever or whatsoever falls, they stand sure for ever. They are those wise bullders of whom Christ speaks, *Mat. 7. 24. Whosoever beareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house upon a Rock, and the rain descended, and the floods come, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not. Psal. 26. 12. My foot standeth in an even place.* All other persons and parties stand upon slippery places, and have but an uncertain standing. When they are in the height of all their glory and confidence, they are often gone in a moment. A Christian stands sure ; which way ever the wheel of Providence moves, it moves in favour of the upright ; he is still uppermost, when

when he is undermost; he hath the better; when
 he hath the worst; all the vicissitudes and returns
 of Prosperity and affliction, do make no change
 upon him as to the main; he is as happy under
 all his outward losses, as in his greatest gains; he's
 as honourable under the greatest contempt that's
 poured out upon him, as under the highest hu-
 mane applause: he's as safe in the greatest dangers,
 as when there is no danger appearing; he's built
 upon that Rock, whence the greatest winds and
 waves can never beat him down: he's built upon
 the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Ephes.
 2. 20. He hath Religion, Righteousness, Inno-
 cency, yea, the Truth and Strength of the Al-
 mighty God to uphold him: if ever a Christian
 falls, Christ must fall with him; if ever a Chri-
 stian falls, the Scripture must fall with him: That
 Word, concerning which Christ hath said, Matth.
 24. 35. *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my
 Word shall not pass away.* He shall never be disap-
 pointed of his hopes; unless faithfulness can dis-
 appoint: he shall never be deceived; till Truth
 becomes a lye: he shall never wholly be overcome,
 unless Almightyness become weakness. The car-
 nal world built all their hopes and comforts on
 the sand, on the wisdom of the flesh, on the riches,
 strength, and multitude of their partakers, on the
 successes of their carnal counsels: they bottom
 their very souls upon meer facies, and presump-
 tions, upon that wood, hay, and stubble; the Do-
 ctrines, Inventions, and Traditions of men; nay
 they have their foundation in the dirt and mire,
 they strengthen themselves in their wickedness.
 If iniquity be able to support them, if Unrighteous-
 ness be able to exalt them, if Unrighteousness can

secure them, they have something to lean upon; but if Righteousness be it that must carry it, if a good conscience, simplicity and godly sincerity; if the favour and faithfulness of God, an interest in Christ, be the only sure refuge, then where are the generations of the ungodly? When they are in the height of all their glory, 'tis but one turn of the wheel, and they are thrown off their legs, their hopes and their joys vanish, and all their thoughts perish. If God and Christ, and Scriptures, and Conscience be of any Consistency, Christians have enough. If unrighteousness and wickedness should carry it in this world, never so clearly and constantly; yet if righteousness and holiness will but carry it in the world to come, Christians are safe enough. Carnal men, who build their hopes on this earth, when the earth is shaken, their hopes are shaken, their hearts are shaken, and they are even at their wits ends. But saith the Psalmist, Psal. 112. 7, 8. *The heart of the righteous shall be established, he shall not be afraid of any evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* Psal. 46. 2, 3. *Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the Sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Though all the earth should be in an uproar, though the whole world should be turned topsie turvy, yet we will not fear, though the mountains shake, yet our hearts shall not shake.* Are they not wise men, that are gotten into such a case?

Psal. 4. *The treasures of wisdom are found with them.* You will yet, it may be, be ready to say, What have they gotten by their Wisdom? Where is the Income and Revenue, that all their wisdom

Wisdom hath brought them in? If you were to give an account of their losings, you might easily bring in a long Bill; some of them have had so little wit, as to lose all they have; but, will you take your Bill, and write down their gains? Why, if you will hearken to me a while, I will shew you what they have gained: They have gotten great treasure, as poor as any of them seem to be, they are the richest men in the world. Particularly,

1. They have gotten the Pearl, Christ is theirs, they are those Merchants, *Mat. 13.* which have bought goodly Pearls, and they have found the Pearl of greatest price, *Cant. 2. 6. My beloved is mine, that Corner stone which is laid in Sion, which is precious stone,* *1 Pet. 1.* he is theirs; that Pearl which is the price of Souls, the Ransom that was paid for them, which is the food of Souls; their bread and water, the living bread, the water of life, of which who so eateth and drinketh, shall live for ever: He is theirs, God hath given them him whom they have sought, *Isa. 9. 6. To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given:* He is become their own, and they call him their own. (*My Lord and my God*) said *Thomas.* *My Saviour,* said *Mary.* This is the richest of treasures, that comprehends all treasures in it; this will supply all their necessities, make up all their losses; they want nothing that have Christ to be theirs. Other men have riches, and I have none (saith the Saint) I, but Christ is mine: Other men have Friends in the world, and I have none, Oh! but I have Christ to be my friend: Other men live at ease, in their pleasures, but it is not so with me, but Christ is mine, and I find rest and pleasure enough in him. When I look upon the pomp, and the glory, and

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gallantry of the World, I must say, *These are none of mine*; when I look upon the rich fields, the pleasant Vallies, the fruitful Hills, the Oxen and the Sheep, the Gold and the Silver of the Earth, I must say, *These are none of mine*; but yet the Pearl is mine, and that is all things to me.

2. They have gotten the *Whrie Stone*, the stone of absolution, *Rom. 2. 7, I will give him the White Stone*, which is a Token of absolution: It was a custom among the *Heathens*, to absolve Persons by giving them a White Stone, and to condemn by giving a black Stone. *Rom. 5. 10. We have received the Atonement*; God is reconciled, our sins are forgiven, our Souls are absolved from those black Bills of Inditement which were laid in against us; we have received the *Signal* of this Atonement, the holy Dove, the Spirit of the Lord in our hearts; and the sence of this Atonement hence arising, the peace of God possesseth our hearts; we taste and see what it is to be at peace with God, in those smiles from his face, in those dawnings of the light of his countenance, and the shedding abroad his Love in our hearts. Sinners, whilst you carry with you every one his black stone, his sentence of condemnation, the earnest of eternal vengeance, these have their white stones, the marks of their absolution, and the earnest of their eternal blessedness. When ye look on their naked backs, their hungry bellies, the cold lodgings, that are the lot of many of them, you will say, surely these are a poor and foolish People; but see that precious stone they carry with them, wherever they are, there you may behold their Riches and wisdom, when you consider your own
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fineries and braveries, your dainties and delicates, your ornaments and jewels, your possessions and honours, you are transported with pride and jollity, and have almost forgot that you are men; but what signifies that black stone in thy breast, that guilt thou carriest in thy Conscience? Consider Sinners, what is it to have God your enemy, wrath your portion, the curse cleaving to your possessions, your sentence of death written in your hearts, and upon your consciences, and then you will think those men have gotten something, that have gotten their absolution from all this.

3. The *white Robe*, or the Sanctification. Holiness is not only imposed on Christians as their duty, but bestowed on them as their privilege: therefore the Lord promises to his people as their encouragement to suffer affliction, *Heb. 12. 10. That hereby they shall be made partakers of his holiness*: This is the precious *Treasure* of the Saints, *Mat. 12. 35. A good man out of the good Treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things*: A good man, though he hath no treasure in his house, nothing in his purse, nothing in the field, yet he hath a good treasure in his heart, a treasure of wisdom and knowledge, a treasure of grace and holiness, a treasure of faith and patience, and humility and mercy, and this is a rich treasure. 'Tis the rich in faith, rich in grace and holiness, that is a rich man indeed; a heart full of grace is a better treasure than a house full of gold; as much as strong men glory in their strength, as much as wise men glory in their wisdom, as much as great men glory in their greatness, one grain of grace is more worth than all: As much as holiness is

disputed and trampled upon by the men of the world; it is of greater value than mountains of gold and silver.

Holiness is the *health* of the Soul, the soundness of the Spirit, Health is a poor mans portion, look what sickness is to the body, that is sin to the Soul, the disease of it; sinful souls are sickly souls, and as it is with sickly bodies, so it is with sinful souls, they are neither fit for employments, nor capable of any considerable enjoyment: A sick man can do little service, and can take little comfort in any thing he hath; sinful souls are good for nothing, and can take comfort in nothing that is good: Holiness is the health of our Souls, Sanctification is the restitution of the Soul, with all its faculties, to their rectitude and soundness: By Holiness the soul is, 1. Made fit for service, and that is a great blessing: What a misery is it to be an useless unprofitable lump, good for nothing; to be serviceable, and that to such high and noble ends, as the honouring the Name, the carrying on the Designs, the shewing forth the Vertues of the Eternal God; what a blessed thing is it? 2. The soul by Holiness is made capable of enjoying the Lord, and all the gifts of God; What is the reason that Christians, under a decay of grace, and overgrown with corruption, can take comfort in nothing? Tell them of the promises of the Gospel, of the privileges of the Gospel, of the Joies, and Hopes and Glory to come, they can take no pleasure, they can find no sweetness in it; Promises do not affect them, privileges do not affect them, future hopes and expectations do not affect them: What is the reason of this? Oh! their souls are sick,

sick, and cannot taste, or relish any thing that is good: by how much more healthy men are, by so much more delight they can take in their business, by so much more comfort they can take in their friends, by so much the more pleasure they can take in their meat and drink, or any thing else that they enjoy: And so it is with a healthy soul, by how much the more holiness, by so much the more sweetness: Duties are sweet, Ordinances are sweet, Promises are sweet, the Society of the Saints is sweet, the Meditations of God are sweet: They can truly be said to enjoy their friends, to enjoy the Promises and Ordinances, to enjoy their very Duties, to enjoy God in all they have or do, whose souls are in such an holy healthful state. This is another of the measures of wisdom which the Saints have gotten, they have gotten Holiness.

4. *The Adoption*, Rom. 9. 4. *Who are Israelites, whose is the Adoption.* There is a twofold Israelite, an Israelite after the flesh, such were the natural children and posterity of Abraham; and an Israelite after the Spirit, such are all believers, the children of the faith of Abraham; and according to this distinction of Israelites, there is a twofold Adoption, outward and visible, which pertain to the natural seed; inward and invisible, which is the peculiar privilege of the spiritual Seed, all the children of the faith of Abraham. The Adoption comprehends in it, 1. The grace of Adoption, whereby the Lord hath given us the relation of Children, and a right to all those privileges and blessings that flow from that relation, Job. 1. 12.

To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God. 2. The Spirit of Adoption, Gal. 4. 6. And because you are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father: This Spirit is called the Spirit of Adoption, not only because it works in us the disposition, and dutiful affections of Sons, but especially because it witnesses our Sonship, Rom. 8. 15, 16. *We have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit; that we are the children of God: The Spirit evidences and witnesses our Sonship, and thereby enables us to cry, Abba, Father, that is, to call God Father; Gives us the boldness and confidence of children, to come to him on all occasions; to make our complaints to Him, to make known our wants, our fears, and our dangers to him; to make our requests to him, to depend on him for provision, for protection; to put in for a child's portion, for a share in his riches; to lay claim to, and to lay hold upon the inheritance of Sons; to cast our care upon him, and to quiet and comfort our selves in the sufficiency of our Father. I have nothing, saith the child, but from hand to mouth, but my Father hath enough; this is a blessed and glorious priviledge that Christians have obtained, to be the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, 1 Joh. 3. 1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God. Seemeth it a small thing unto you, said David, to be the Son in Law of a King? Why, what King was it? It was one that was none of the best, and yet he was a King, and that was a great thing, for such a poor man as David was, to be Son in Law to a King.*

But

what is it to be Sons and Heirs to the King of Glory? The Lord sayes to all his Sons as the Father of the Prodigal said to his eldest Son, Luke 15. 31. *Son thou art ever with me, all that I have is thine*: Son, Daughter, (saith the Lord) *thou shalt be ever with me, all that I have in Heaven and Earth, all is thine*, Mat. 5. *Blessed are the Peace-makers; why so, they are the Children of God*: Gods children are blessed Children, not one of them shall go without their Fathers blessing: The Lord hath not only, as Isaac, a blessing for one of his Children, but as Jacob, he hath a blessing for every child? If thou be Gods child, God, even thy God will give thee his blessings.

5. The Kingdom, Mat. 5. *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, Luke 12. 32. *Fear not little Flock, for it is your Fathers pleasure to give you the Kingdom*. To whom is the Kingdom given? To the little flock, not to the herds of Swine, the droves of wild Beasts, the prophane multitudes of this Wilde and wicked World, but to the little Flock of Christ, those few that he hath called out of the World, who follow him, theirs is the Kingdom: What Kingdom? Why, the Kingdom of Heaven, a Kingdom of Glory, a Kingdom of Righteousness, a Kingdom of Peace, a Kingdom of joy and blessedness, the everlasting Kingdom: And here we are fallen upon that height, and depth, and length, and breadth, which cannot be fathomed or measured; here is the wisdom of Christians, they have gotten the birth-right and the blessing, the Sonship and the inheritance, theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; here is the faith and patience, and hope, and prayers, and sufferings, and labours of the Saints, the riches of their faith, the fruit of their patience,

ence, the matter of their hope, the return of their prayers, the reward of their sufferings, the end of their labours, the everlasting Kingdom.

Now judge, upon all this which hath been said; whom will ye account the wise men; shall *those* be accounted wise, whom the world, or those whom God accounts such? Shall *those* pass for fools now, who will be found wise at last? Are *those* the wise men, who never understood what they had to do here, and so never minded nor heeded that necessary work for which they were sent into the World? Are our Infants and Children, that mind nothing else but their play, and their meat, and their cloaths, are *those* the wise ones of the World? Are they the Wise Builders, who have laid their foundation on the Sand? When the Winds, and the floods, and the waves have broken down, and blown away all that you have been Building: will You then boast of Your Wisdom? You that count yourselves such Wise Men, and demand what the Saints have gotten, tell us, what *you* have gotten by all *your* Wisdom? The Saints have something to shew for themselves, as Witnesses of their prudence. Christ the hidden Manna, that living bread, that they have laid up for themselves against a time of need, that peace which they have gotten to support them in a time of trouble; these are some things to shew they have not foolishly lost their time; every grace that they have gotten, every comfort that they have treasured up, there is something more to shew, every dead lust pleads for them; *Sampson's* dead Lyon was not a greater proof of his strength, than Christians dead lusts are of their Wisdom; they have gotten the birth-right and the blessing, who was the

the wiser of the two, *Eſau* that ſold the birth-right, and loſt the bleſſing, or *Jacob* that got both? they have gotten the Kingdom too, theirs is the Kingdom of heaven; whilſt others have been dividing the ſpoyles here below, ſcrambling for ſhadowes and fancies, ſharing the Dominions and Dignities, and Preferments, and Pleaſures of this world amongſt them; theſe have been laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come; doth this ſpeak them ſuch a fooliſh company as you would make them? Have they made ſuch a wiſe choice, and taken ſuch a wiſe courſe, and yet muſt they go for fools? Is this your ſerious and ſober judgment? Do you in earneſt think, that in that change which the Goſpel hath made upon them, they are changed for the worſe? that in the choice which they have made of God, rather than the world, of Chriſt, inſtead of their luſts, of things eternal, before things temporal, that they have herein choſen to their loſs? Is this your thought, will you write down this as your judgment, and put your hand to it, and be content that this writing ſhould be produced at the laſt Judgment, as the Teſt by which you will be tryed, whether you are wiſe or fooliſh? Are you Chriſtians, and do you believe the Scriptures, and are you not yet aſhamed that any ſuch thoughts ſhould come into your hearts? Will you ſay, The Devil is the beſt Maſter, and he's a fool that will not be his ſervant, but Chriſt is an hard Maſter, and none that's wiſe will venture after him? Will you ſay, that *Moses* was a fool, in reſuſing to be called the ſon of *Pharoah's* Daughter, chooſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, that

that the Apostles, and the Disciples were fools, that Peter, and Paul, and John, and James were fools, with the rest of those holy Men and Women, who denied themselves, took up their Cross and followed Christ, and that the Scribes and Pharisees, and Publicans, and Harlots, and Drunkards, and Gluttons, that made a mock and a scorn of him and them, had more wit than they? Is not this the very thing you say in charging folly upon those, whose aim and desire is to walk in the same steps that those primitive Christians walked in before them? Is this your Christianity? Is this your reason and Religion, and honesty? Speak out your hearts in plain termes. No man would hearken to Christ, unless he were a fool: no man would be holy, unless he were a fool: no man would leave his lusts and his pleasures, and his liberties, and his vanities, unless he had first lost his wits: Or, at least, no wise man would take up more of Christianity, than the name, and the shell, and the shadow: none but a fool would make sure work for his soul, would go through with Christ and Christianity, would be an inward, hearty, resolved, universal, sincere Christian. Would any wise man put it out of doubt, that Christ is his, put it out of doubt, that his soul is safe, that he's passed from death to life, and shall never come into condemnation? What do your brutish hearts and wayes speak less, or rather than this? Sinners, is this all the wisdom or honesty you have, thus to speak or think? If it be, Be it known unto you all, that these foolish Saints have more wit, than to count the reproaches of such brutish spirits, to be any disparagement to them or their profession, and therefore if you will, mock on, and go on, to admire

mire your selves and the oaks which you have chosen, and the gardens which you have desired, whilst you despise these and their wayes; but however, whilst they have this assurance, that God doth not count them what you call them, that [You] will not call them at last, what you call them now; you must give them leave (though they think never so meanly of themselves) yet, still to have the same high thoughts of their God, of their Gospel, of that holy profession and way that they have chosen.

Use 1. Let the ungodly World hence learn to have a better opinion of these men, and to forbear reproaching them; think with your selves upon what hath been said: These men may be wiser than we are aware of, they may be honest men; we may be mistaken, these may be the *Israel of God*, those *Nathaniels* of whom Christ saith, *Joh. 1. 47. Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile*; these may be the *little Flock*, on whom it is the *Fathers* pleasure to bestow the Kingdom; these may be those *little ones*, whom whosoever offends, it were better that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the midst of the Sea: And what if they should be so? In what case are you then, that have reproached and persecuted them? but I must be bold to tell, there's no *May be*, in the matter. I question not, but if you would impartially weigh what hath been spoken, and what shall yet farther be spoken, you will see, that if God hath any people in the world, these are they; and therefore my advice is, that you refrain from these men, and let them alone, lest, if you do go on, you be found fighters against God.

Obj. But where be there any such? There be some that

that make a fair shew, and make glorious pretences to the strictness of Religion, but they are hypocrites and deceivers, and these are they that we only speak against.

Sol. 1. Let this be granted, That such men as have been described, (if) there be any such, are truly wise men; that men of such Principles, that men of this profession (if) they really be what they profess, and live according to their principles, that these are men of wisdom; do but grant that godliness is wisdom, and the fear of the Lord is understanding: I would that I could bring you thus far, heartily to grant, that godliness hath an excellency in it, and that a life led according to those Principles of godliness, which have been laid before you, is the most excellent life: Hence these two things will unavoidably follow, 1. That by how much more exactly and strictly any persons live according to the Principles of godliness, by so much the more have they attained to of true wisdom: If Godliness be our wisdom and excellency, then by how much the more precisely godly any persons are, by so much the more wise and excellent, by how much the more precise a Christian or godly man is, by so much the more he is a Christian or a godly man; and therefore, let never any man be blam'd for that he is so much, but that he is no more precise. 2. By how much the more loosely any persons live from the Rules of Religion, by how much the more liberty they take to walk after the flesh, by so much the more foolish they are; and so you may without controversie conclude, that whatever these precise people be, you that are Libertines (to be sure) are fools.

a. Are there none such? What, hath God no

people in the world? hath the Devil gotten all? God hath a people somewhere, and a peculiar people, whom he hath chosen to salvation, whom he hath redeemed, and called, and justified, and sanctified, and set apart for himself, from the rest of the world, all are not *Israel*, all are not Disciples, but there are some whom God hath peculiarly set apart to himself, from the rest of men; and where are these to be found, if not among these precise walkers? the peculiar people of God are, as hath been sufficiently proved, an holy people, an hearing people, a praying people, a zealous people, a watchful, gainful, industrious, sober, meek, merciful, patient people, and all this in sincerity: Now, where shall we look to find out such a people? Must we rake the kennels, and search the sinks of the earth? Must we seek in the Ale-houses, or Taverns, or Play-houses? Shall we take out the drunkards and riotous, the swearers and lyars, the covetous and oppressors, the vain ones of the earth, the blind People, that brutish generation that knows not, nor mind not the Lord or his wayes, and say of any of these, surely here they be, these are the people of God; here be the men that are no hypocrites, these are that *Royal Priesthood*, that holy Nation, that peculiar people, whom God hath called to shew forth his praise before the world? Sinners, if you have so much reason or conscience, as to conclude that none of these are they, then tell us farther, who, or where they are, or else at last acknowledge, that if God hath a people any where, 'tis amongst those that you have reproached.

3. If you say, there be hypocrites among them, and these are they that you speak against, and not against

gainst those that are upright; let me give you this double advice.

1. Take heed you mistake not the mark: do not shoot at Saints indeed, under the name and disguise of hypocrites: do not count that hypocrisy, which God accounts sincerity; you may be mistaken (as I told you before) and what if you should be mistaken? what if it should prove, not only that the men which you reproach for hypocrites, God should account sincere: but if the very thing which you call their hypocrisy, the Lord counts their excellency, what if it should be so? Then you have shot a fair shot; every reproach which you have thus cast out, is as so much dirt which you have thrown into the Face of God, so many darts which you have shot into the Apple of God's Eye: You who are so free in reproaching Professors, take heed that it be not found; that the ground of all your evil language against them, and evil usage of them, be not for that they are; but for that they are not hypocrites.

2. If they be hypocrites, and only such that you speak against, take heed you mistake not your Arrow; do not cast that upon them for a reproach, which is good; do not take good names to reproach evil men. If they be hypocrites any of them, and you know them to be such, call them hypocrites; but do not take the name of Saint, or Precisian, or holy Brother, and put them as marks of disgrace and scorn upon them; he that calls a Saint hypocrite, reproaches the Christian; he that in scorn calls an hypocrite Saint, or holy Brother, reproaches Christianity it self.

Use 2. But I have yet a greater request unto you then to have a good opinion of these men; and

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no longer to reproach them; my request to you farther is, *That you would come in and be of this number.* Some of you it may be, will be ready to reply, he shall have hard work that will perswade me to be a Precisian; and truly, I am afraid so too, if all that the Devil can do, will hinder it; if all that your carnal reason and fleshly lusts can do, if all that your sinful companions can do will hinder it, I shall be sure enough not to prevail with you; yet know, that the motion which I make to you, is from the Lord, and if you deny me, you therein deny him; and if you deny him, you must come upon it, there's another day coming when he will deny you; You say, you will not be perswaded, but what is it you will not be perswaded to: Why, this is it, you will not take the Yoke of Christ upon you, you will not be advis'd, nor be rul'd by him; so as to live as he would have you live, but you will have your liberty still to walk according to your own mind and heart; that is, you will not be Christians; Will you not? Are you in good earnest? Are you content that the Lord should take you at your word, and forever give you up to your hearts lust, and let you alone to walk in your own counsels? Are you content from henceforth to give up your hope in Christ? are you content to be damn'd: Brethren, this is the choice you are put to, either an holy Life, or everlasting Death; either you must submit to the Yoke of Christ, or you can have no benefit by the Cross of Christ; either you must kiss his golden scepter, or be broken in pieces with his Rod of Iron; refuse to follow him in his Kingdom of Grace, and you thereby shut your selves out of the Kingdom of Glory: Whereof, that I may the more effectually

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convince you, I shall yet farther prove to you, both by Scripture and reason, that this strict and precise way of life, is so undoubtedly and absolutely necessary to salvation; that whosoever doth not thus walk, cannot escape the damnation of hell.

I know carnal men are confident that they shall be saved without so much ado, and this is that which hardens them in their sins, their strong conceit that the way is not so strait and narrow as many would make them believe; they doubt not but they have found out a shorter and easier way than this; and what is this easier way? Why, 'tis but call upon God for mercy, keep thy Church, do no body any wrong, be no drunkard, no swearer, no adulterer; or if thou be sometimes overtaken, ask God forgiveness, cry God mercy, and then hope well, never despair of Gods mercy, fear not, thou shalt be safe enough.

Now I shall make it plain to you, that this loose and easie way of Religion, will certainly leave every soul that goes no further, to perish everlastingly; and that this strict holy life, which hath been described, is indispensably necessary to salvation. Beloved, the matter I am upon is weighty, a mistake in your Religion is mortal, if that which you have taken up for the way of life, be not so, you are undone for ever; and that this your easie way is not it I shall now make evident.

1. From Scripture; Let us but seriously examine and weigh those many high expressions which we find in Scripture, in the *Commands, Exhortations, Instructions, Instances, Promises, and Prayers* recorded in it; in all which, the one way of life is described, and then let any reasonable man judge, if all this amount to no more than that poor, and pitiful, and empty thing, which carnal men count their Religion.

1. For

1. For Scripture-commands consider these; Strive to enter in at the strait gate, looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; not sloathful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; Put off concerning the conversation, the old man which is corrupt; according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness: Wash thine heart from thine iniquities, that thou mayst be saved: How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but (speak ye) that which is good, to the use of edifying, that may minister grace to the hearers. Walk in love, love one another, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them which persecute you; render to no man evil for evil, but overcome evil with goodness; mortifie your members which are upon the Earth, walk in the spirit, abstain from all appearance of evil; be watchful; stand with your loynes girded, and your lights burning.

2. For Scripture-instructions, consider these; The Grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live righteously, godly, and soberly, in this present World: Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the poor, and to keep himself unspotted of the World. They that be Christs, have crucified the flesh with affections and lusts. He that is angry with his Brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgement. He that looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her in his heart. Of every idle word men shall give account at the day of Judgement. If any Man seem to be religious, and bridletb not his tongue, that Man's Religion is vaine.

3 For Scripture-instances; David is said to be a man after Gods own heart, & did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; & turned not Aside from anything that the Lord had commanded him all the dayes of his life, save only, &c. Of Josiah it is recorded, That his heart was tender and perfect with the Lord his God, and that he turned not aside to the right hand, or to the left. Paul professes that he served the Lord instantly, night and day; that forgetting those things which are behind, he reached forth to the things that are before, pressing to the mark, &c. The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. To me to live is Christ, to dye is gain. I so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air, but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest preaching to others I myself should become a cast-away.

For Scripture-promises, consider these; Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the meek, the merciful, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the pure in heart, they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for they shall see God, theirs is the Kingdom of heaven; they shall be comforted, filled, and great is their reward in heaven.

For Scripture-prayers, consider these; The God of peace sanctifie you wholly, and I pray God that your whole spirit, soul and body may be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight..

Multitudes of such like Scriptures might be added, but these may suffice. Now wherefore are all these things written? Wherefore are these strict commands given, these holy lives of Saints left upon Record, these

these promises made, and these prayers kept upon the file? Are they not all written for our *learning*, to let every man and woman understand what manner of persons they must be, what manner of *Lives* they must *live*, if they will be saved? If less, or a lower Religion would serve, to what purpose is this waste. If it be so, People may forbear to charge Precisians with keeping more ado than needs, and lay in their charge against the Scriptures, for requiring more than needs. But do you think indeed, that the Scriptures have spoken these things in vain? If it be not in vain, if all this be comprehended under the one thing needful; if all this do but shew us the one and *only* way of Life; if we must be thus renewed and changed in our minds, and must thus *holily* and *unblameably* order our Lives, or else we cannot be saved, as the Scriptures mentioned many of them expressly affirm, then what will become of that poor confident multitude we are now dealing with? Does all this amount to no more than keeping your Church, saying your prayers, *learning* and saying over the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, living peaceably with your Neighbours, paying every man his own, cloying to God for mercy when you have committed a sin, and the like? Can you call this cold, lifeless way, your striving to enter in at the strait gate? Is this your *working out your salvation with fear and trembling*? Is this all that is meant by *fighting the good fight of Faith, by wrestling against Flesh and Blood, against Principalities and Powers, by being instant in Prayer, fervent in Spirit, watching and running, and pressing towards the mark*? Brethren, if there be one way of Life; if all this which hath been represented to you out of the

Scriptures, be to shew you from the Lord, what a strait way this one way of life is; and if you will compare your way you depend upon with it, methinks you shall need no more to convince you of your dangerous mistake hitherto, and to leave you more ready to embrace the exhortation I am pressing upon you; namely, To come in among the number of, and take upon the holy course of these circumspect Christians.

But if this be not sufficient, I shall yet make it more evident by *Reasons* drawn from the Scripture, which I shall give you in these *Six Propositions*.

1. The Gospel requires, as indispensably necessary to salvation, *inward holiness*, or the renewing of the heart, or inner-man. Needs this any proof to them that understand the Scriptures? There must be *another Spirit*. Numb. 14. 24. *A new heart*, Ezek. 36. 26. *A clean heart*, Psal. 73. 1. *A true heart*, or *an upright heart*, *sprinkled from an evil Conscience*, Hebr. 10. 22. Ezek. 18. 31. *Make you a new heart, and a new spirit, for why will ye dye?* Jer. 4. 14. *Oh Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.* What do these Scriptures, especially the addition in the two last, *For why will ye dye?* And [*that thou mayest be saved?*] What do these import less than this, That there is no salvation possible, there is nothing but certain death and destruction, to those whose hearts are not washed and made new, *John 3. 3. Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* What is the product of this new birth, or this conversion, but a new creature? Some there

There are, it is true, that interpret this Conversion, which is made so necessary to Salvation, to be nothing else but the coming of persons from *Judaism*, or *Paganism*, to *Christianity*, to the owning and embracing the Christian Faith. But if this be true, then all that believe Christ to be the *Messiah*, and are baptized, and live in the profession of the Christian Faith, shall be saved, Come ye Drunkards, come ye Adulterers, Lyars, Covetous, with all the profane Root of Nominal Christians, and keep an Holy-day to the memory of these two Doctors, who bring you such a large and easie Gospel, as will carry you all to Heaven, with all your lusts and lewdness upon your backs. But is this true? Is this Gospel? Is this all the conversion that is necessary to Salvation? It cannot be: For,

First, There are many that embrace the Christian Faith that are Hypocrites, and shall Hypocrites be saved?

Secondly, There are many such Converts that walk disorderly, *whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who minde earthly things*, Phil. 3. 18. Of whom the Apostle here tell us, that *their end is destruction*.

2. This inward Holinesse which the Gospel requires, stands not in some sudden and unconstant good thoughts, or some transient good affections, but is an *holy frame or habit*; thus much is intimated in the fore-mentioned expression, *Another Spirit, a new Heart, a new Creature*. An holy thought, a good desire is another thing from a new heart; they cannot so much as evidence, that the heart is renewed; as in a renewed heart there may be some evil thoughts, and evil lusts arising and

working, so some good thoughts and affections may spring up in an evil heart; true holiness is not a fit, but a frame; there may be fits of passion, or of pride, or of envy (too often in a Saint, and yet in the main he may be a Saint still: There may be fits of devotion, fits of zeal sometimes in a sinner, and yet he is a sinner still. Holiness is the temper and constitution of a Christian, his new nature that abideth in him.

3. This inward habitual Holiness stands in an universal compliance of the heart with the whole Will of God; the heart that is formed after the Image of God, is conformed to the Will of God, *Psal. 40. Thy Law is within my heart*; not a piece, but the whole; every word and tittle of it. The Law is within me. The Law is said to be within the heart of a Saint in a double sense:

First, It is published, and revealed, and made known in the heart; it is understood by the soul, there is the light of the Word shining in every Christian.

Secondly, It is embraced, approved, consented to, there is the love of the Law in the heart of a Christian; the heart closes with it, and all that it requires, as a good word, and worthy of all acceptation.

A Christian doth not only accept the Promises of the Gospel as good words and comfortable words, but can heartily write, *Good is the Word of the Lord*, upon every precept; he likes his Duties as well as his Priviledges, his work as well as his reward. This cowardliness of heart is set forth in those expressions of a willing mind, a ready mind, a forward mind. And as his heart is towards his works, so is it for any work the Lord calls it to; he hath

hath respect to all the Commandments; he would not be without one leaf, no nor one line of the whole Word of God; he is ready to every good work; he would not have one duty abated to him of all that God hath required; he would not have one sin allowed to him of all that God hath forbidden him: He that sayes concerning any one word in the whole will of God, This I must have struck out, or be dispensed within it, ere I can be a Christian, his heart is not upright: He that would have any one sin to be no sin, any one duty to be no duty, any one sin to be allowed him, or any one duty to be abated him, is no Christian.

4. This inward habitual Holiness is such as beares the sway, and hath the perheminence in the heart, though sin be there still, yet where there is true Grace, sin is an underling, and brought into captivity, it hath lost that power and interest which it had in the Sould before, and the heart is now given up to God; the stream runs Heavenward, the stream of the thoughts, the stream of the affections run that way; God and the way of Holinesse hath a greater share and greater power in the heart than all the world; there is more love to God, stronger resolutions for following God, than can be balanced by the highest interest of the flesh. God and the World stand as two suitors for the heart, but God carries it from the world; so that, as before, it followed the world with the neglect of God, now it will follow God with the neglect of the World; before it would, it may be, mind God and godliness, as far as it could without prejudice to its worldly interest, so far as it could with honour, or ease, or safety; but now it will mind the world and its fleshly interest, so far only as is consistent with godliness and a good consciences.

this is sincerity, and the clearest and most certain evidence of it. Can we imagin that we love God sincerely, when we love the World better? when we love our ease, or credit, or pleasures, or carnal friends better? When these can do more with us, and command farther, than God and golry, *Matth. 10. 27. He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me. Luke 14. 33. Whosoever he be of you that forsake not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.* If there be any certain unquestionable Truths in the whole Doctrine of the Gospel, this is one of them, That whosoever hath true saving Grace, hath more love to God and holiness, than to all things else whatsoever. Though it be controverted, Whether common grace and saving grace do not differ more than in degree, yet this is without controversy, That saving grace doth contain in it a higher degree of love to God, than to all things else.

5. This inward, habitual, prevailing holiness, where ever it is, will infallibly bring forth this strict, precise, and holy life. For,

First, That holiness in the heart will bring forth holiness of life, is as naturally certain, as that he that hath the life and reason of a man, will act as a man; as that a root will bring forth such branches and fruit, as partake of the kind and nature of the root, as that a fig-tree will bring forth figs, that an olive-tree will bring forth olives.

Secondly, It is as certain, that according to the proportion of holiness in the heart, such will be the proportion of it in the life; if holiness bear the sway in the heart, it will bear the rule in the life; if that little good that is in the heart, be held as an underling in the Soul, thereafter will the life

to be ; this is as certain, as that the Soul governs the Body.

Thirdly, It's no less certain, that the lowest degree of prevailing holiness in the heart, will bring forth this precise holy life, In the sense I have described it : that is, though there be not perfect holiness brought forth ; though he that hath a lower degree of true grace, fall much shorter of that perfection, than he that hath an higher degree ; though there be many failings, and wandrings, and weaknesses, and turnings aside to iniquity, through corruption and temptation, yet thus far the lowest of Saints have arrived, That his aims, desires, endeavours are after a perfectly holy life ; he hath a respect to every Commandment, to every Duty, he doth not habitually allow himself in any iniquity ; there is some change in his course actually appearing, and this he purposes to himself, and sets his heart upon it, to grow up day by day to a more thorow and universal conformity to all the principles of godliness laid down before him in the Scriptures, and made manifest in his conscience.

This is as certain as the two former, He that is sincere would be perfect, in the true love of holiness, is necessarily included a love and longing for it in the perfection of it. He that loveth holiness for it self, will love it most when it is most it self, in its perfection ; and love and longing, will infallibly bring forth labouring, and following after. Therefore,

6. Whosoever is not truly a person of a pre-
sente life, is certainly in the state of damnation ;
This so clearly follows from the former Propositions,
that it needs no further proof. He that is not

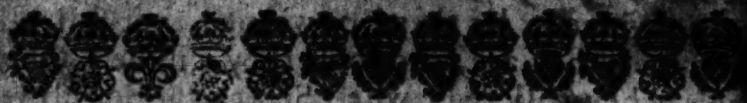
inwardly, habitually, universally sanctified; he that loves any thing more than God or godliness, that is he that is not converted and new born, and so become a new Creature, is actually in the state of damnation; and he who is not a precise walker, is not thus converted, new born or sanctified; for whoever is made this new Creature, will infallibly make it appear (as hath been proved) by this newness of life.

You see, Beloved, to what issue this matter is brought; either you must take up this strict way of holiness, or be reprobates from God. Whosoever there be amongst you, that have the most rooted enmity in your hearts, against this holiness of life, and have cast the greatest slight and contempt on it, and those that thus live, and as *Michael* did *David*, do despise them in your hearts; whoever among you are most peremptorily resolved against hearkening to any farther Treaties about this thing, casting them off with the greatest scorn and indignation, I must be bold to tell you from God, That if you live and die in this mind, God must cease to be true, the Scriptures must be proved to be a lye, the Doctrine of the Gospel a meer forgery or falsehood, or you will be shut for ever out of the Kingdome of God.

And do you not yet see enough, to perswade you to come in and be of this number? Are you not yet convinc'd that 'tis your duty, that 'twill be your wisdom to be such? That none but Fools and Brutes will continue to be Libertines? While you charge folly on the Saints, will you at last prove your selves to be the onely fools? And will you verifie that Proverb, *Bray a fool in a Mortar, and yet his folly will not depart from him?* Shall it

he said of you, Let them be instructed, let them be convinced, let them be warned, yet still all's one, fools they are, and fools they will be? Oh ye fools, when will ye be wise? Search the Scriptures, and learn of them, come unto Christ, and learn of him; and if he do not speak the same things which here have been spoken, if he do not teach you the same Lesson which here you have been taught, then go on, and take your liberty still; but if Christ sayes, Be holy; if Christ sayes, be circumspect; if Christ sayes, Be perfect, and you still refuse to hearken, then carry this inscription upon your foreheads; *We have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what wisdom is there in us?*

JOHN



John 1. 47.

Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

WE need not go far back, to find out the sense of these words; which they fully enough contain within themselves. The occasion of them was this, *Philip* calls *Nathaniel* to come to *Christ*; *Nathaniel* being called, comes; and coming to *Christ*, our Lord gives his Judgment of him.

In the words, we have, 1. A note of Observation. *Behold*: This hints to us two things; 1. That *Nathaniel*, a true *Israelite*, is a worthy Sight, worth the observing; *Behold an Israelite*. That a *Nathaniel* is a rare Sight: We do not see to put a *Behold*, on that which we see every day.

2. A Description of *Nathaniel*, and in him, of a sincere godly man. 1. He is an *Israelite*; *Israel* was the last name of *Jacob*, who upon his wrestling, and as a Prince, prevailing with God in Prayer, had this new name given him of God, and was thenceforth called *Israel*; from him, afterwards, the whole generation of the *Jews* were called *Israel*; in the new Testament, all the People of God were called *Israel*, *Gal. 6. 16.* Both in the Old Testament and the New; *Israelites* were such as had the account of the People of God, whom God hath separated, and set apart for himself.

self, as his peculiar people, out of all the rest of the world : so that an *Israelite* here, notes, one that belongs to God, a good man.

2. *An Israelite indeed* ; Ἰσραηλῖτης ; one that's truly an *Israelite* ; not after the flesh, but after the Spirit ; not in shew and appearance, not in conceit, or his own or others Opinions, but in reality.

3. *An Israelite without deceit, in whom is no guile* ; who is no Jugler, or crafty Dissembler, that did only personate, bear the face, and act the part of an *Israelite*, but an honest, down-right, plain-hearted *Israelite*.

In all this we have a full description of a sincere godly man ; he is an *Israelite*, one separated to God, an *Israelite* indeed ; not in conceit or fancy, but in truth ; not in deceit or guile, but in singleness of heart.

That which I intend for the foundation, on which to build my discourse, is, *An Israelite indeed*. Thence let the Doctrine be ?

Dott. A sincere godly man is no Phanatick ; or, Godliness is no fancy. As there is an *Israelite* in conceit, so there is an *Israelite* indeed ; as there is Godliness in shew, so there is Godliness in truth ; Godliness is no fancy.

The great design of Satan and his Instruments is against Godliness, to resist it, disgrace it, and if it were possible, to root it out from under Heaven : and because whilst Godliness appears to be, what indeed it is, in its own lustre, glory, and excellency ; all such attempts against it, are like to be vain and ineffectual : therefore the plot is, to cast it out before the eyes of this Pur-blinde World, and to make them believe that there is no such thing, or that it is not what it is ; that 'tis a mere
fancy

fancy, there is nothing in it: That which Men call Godliness is but a conceit, a meer dream of some brain-sick persons, who thinking themselves wiser and holier than the rest of the World, and being strongly opinionated of their ways, and intoxicated with their own imaginations, whilst they would perswade others that they are in the dark, and under strong delusions, are most of all mistaken and deluded themselves.

Now, because this is such a mischievous Engine, to hinder the propagation of the Gospel, and to hold men back from that true Godliness which is necessary to salvation, and without which they perish everlastingly: I shall through the grace of God, prove and make as evident as the light, the truth of the Doctrine proposed, That *Godliness is no fancy*; and that the sincerest, and strictest Godly men, are most unjustly and unreasonably termed *Fanaticks*, of any persons in the World. By *Godliness*, I mean, that sincere and strict profession and practice of Religion, which is above the size, and beyond the measure of the common sort of people, who call themselves Christians, that which the Scripture calls, *pure Religion, the power of Godliness, walking with God, walking in Spirit, living in all good conscience*.

By a *sincere godly man*, accordingly I understand, the same person which I in the foregoing Discourse meant by a *precise or circumspet Christian*; one that will not adventure his soul on that cheap, easie, outward, careless way of Religion, which the most do, but labours to make sure and thorow work, by setting himself to live up to the height and exactness of those principles of Religion, which he hath received from the Scriptures.

When

When I say, That *Godliness is no fancy*? by a *Fancy*, I mean, that which hath no being, but in the imagination; that which hath no foundation in the Scriptures; but is a meer conceit or airy *Notion*, a figment of mens own brains. This is the reproach that the prophane world cast upon strict godliness, That it is a meer fiction, or a dream of mens own hearts, that the inward likenesse to God, the exact walking with God, living in fellowship and communion with God, the joy of God, the life of faith, the Souls exercising it self upon God, and the Lord Jesus, and the like, are meer conceits, there are no such things, but they are mens own dreams and delusions.

Now, this is that which I shall prove and make good to you, That this godliness, in its greatest purity, preciseness, and spirituality, is not such an empty thing, but is fully and really that which it asserts it self to be, and hath clear foundations in, and an evident conformity to, that *good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*, revealed in the Scriptures.

The proofs which I shall bring in, shall be such as have respect to the special parts of it; where I shall make it manifest;

1. That the Doctrines and principles of godliness are *real Truths*.

2. That the Duties and comforts of godliness are *real Duties and comforts*.

1. That the Doctrines and principles of godliness are *real Truths*. Wisdom hath her pillars, Godliness is not a Castle in the air, but is a building which hath foundations, *Hebr. 6. 1*. I shall instance in some of the chief of their principles, and shew you:

1. Concerning the Being of God, and His Holiness: That this is a certain truth, that there is a God, and that he is an holy God, and a friend to Holiness: If there be any real and evident truth in the world, this is a truth, that there is a God: *Aut Deus est, aut nihil est*, Either, there is a God, or there is nothing: We may as well say, when we see the Sun, and the Moon, and Stars, and the motions of them, when we see the Earth, and the several Creatures upon it; when we see our selves, Men and Women walking up and down thereon, that all this is but conceit, that our eyes deceive us, that our selves, and all the things we see, are but phantasies, and apparitions, as we may question whether there be a God, *Rom. 1. 20. The invisible things of him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.* And to question whether God be an holy God, is the same in effect, as to question whether there be a God; to conceive, that there is a God without Holiness, is to imagine, that there is a God that is no God: Sin is such a defect and imperfection, as is utterly inconsistent with such an infinitely perfect Being; and to question whether God be a Friend to holiness, is to question, whether he be a Friend to himself.

Atheisme, whatever the foolish World ignorantly talk, is the greatest and most notorious *Fanaticism*, *Psal. 14. 1. The Fool says in his heart, there is no God*; he fancies there is not: and *Prophaneness*, that causes men to conceive of God as not so holy and righteous as he is, is next to Atheisme, *Psal. 50. 21. These things thou hast done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was: altogether such*

such a man as thy self; but I will reprove thee, and set
 thee in order before thine eyes. These things thou hast
 done: Thou hast done wickedly; hast been a liar, a
 slanderer; a drunkard, a partaker with adulterers:
 And I kept silence, I let thee alone, and did not pre-
 sently venturie my dislike or displeasure against thee;
 hereupon thou conceitest; because thou wert let
 stoffe in thy sin; and didst not presently smart for
 it: that I liked it well enough, and was altogether
 such a one as thy self: That thou hadst a God after
 thine own heart; after thine own soul; that was never
 the less a friend to thee, for that thou wast, so great
 a friend to thy lusts and wickedness: Thou thought-
 est this, such a foolish conceit thou hast in thy heart;
 but it was but a conceit; I will make thee know
 what I am another manner of God than thou vain-
 ly imaginest; I will have my time for thee, when
 I will reprove thee for all thy wickedness; and con-
 vince thee of thy folly; and set all thy sins in order
 before thee.

Sinners, You that either think that there is no
 God; or because he keeps silence, lets you alone in
 your sins; lets you flourish and prosper in your
 wickednesse, thereupon conclude; He is a Friend,
 one that favours loosenesse and ungodlinesse; he
 will have his time for you, to convince you, and
 reprove you out of these vain conceits, and make
 you know that he hates and detests both you and
 your wayes; and that he loves that holinesse, and
 is a Friend to those holy Ones, which for a time
 he may suffer you to despise and trample upon.
 Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue
 of Satan, (which say they are Jews and are not, but
 devils) behold, I will make them to come and worship
 at thy feet; and to know, that I have loved thee.

You will not now be perswaded, but God will make you know whether you will or not, that these are they whom he hath loved: Please your selves with your own wayes, and blesse your selves in your own hearts while you will, continue your confidence, that God is no such enemy to you, that he is not so hard and severe against ungodlinesse as men speak, that God is a friend to ignorance, formality, licentiousnesse, and counts such his best Subjects. And as for those which make such a talk, and such a shew, and keep so much ado about holinesse and strictnesse, make your selves believe, that God is as much against them as you; and that he doth not like that men should be so fearful of sin, and watchful against sin, and zealous for holinesse; that he likes those best, that will take their ease, and their liberty, and their pleasure: Yet know, that God will have his time for you to make you of another mind, when he shall come to reckon with you, to reprove you, and set your sins in order before you.

2. The Doctrines concerning Sin are certain Truths: I shall mention but these four.

1. That man is a Sinner.
2. That sin is the greatest of evils.
3. That spiritual sins are the greatest of sins.
4. That sin is the root of all misery.

1. That Man is a sinner: A sinner by nature, a sinner by practice; in a sinful state, 1 John. 5. 19. The whole world lyeth in wickednesse: Running on in a sinful course: Psal. 14. They are all gone out of the way; that he is universally sinful; this leaven hath leavened the whole lump; every part

of man, head, heart, hands, and inside, outside, all are full of wounds and bruises, and mortifying sores, Isa. 1. 6. That man is a great sinner, Jer. 17. 9. The heart of a man is desperately wicked; it is become like those bad figs which Jeremiah speaks of, those that were good were very good, and those that were bad were very bad: Psal. 5. 9. Their inward part is very wickedness. 'Tis expressed in the abstract, not wicked, but wickedness, and in the plural number, wickednesses: There is a complication of all sorts of wickednesses; and sin is so rooted, and (as it were) incorporated into the hearts of men, as if their natures were even transubstantiated into a Mass of corruption. Is all this but conceit? Gen. 6. 5. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually. [God saw] Gods eye cannot be deceived; men may think they see what they see not, and may not see what is before their eyes; But can Gods eyes fail him?

2. That sin is the greatest of evils: The Apostle to set forth the formidable appearance that sin had by the Law, expresses it thus, Rom. 7. 13. That sin might appear to be sin: He could find out nothing more evil and odious to express it by, than it self. If he had said, that sin might appear to be a snare, a Serpent, a Viper, a Devil, an Hell that had been much, but yet not enough to set forth this evil of evils: Sin never is seen in its perfect odiousness, but when it shews its own naked face, and looks like it self: We can never know how great an evil sin is, till we know how good the Lord is, how precious Christ is, how precious the Soul of man is, to all which sin is so contrary and destru-

live. Rom. 9. 7. It is said to be *enmity against God*; God hath no Enemy in the world but sin, and those whom sin hath made him. Sin hath set all the earth against the God of glory. From this enmity which sin hath filled the hearts of men with, arise all their rebellions against his word and government; all their unwillingness and averseness from his ways, their weariness of his service, their frowardness, murmurings, impatiences, frettings and insurrections of heart against his dispensations & providence. The unruliness and stubbornness of the wills of men, the distemper and disorders of their passions and affections, the vanity, vileness and confusion of their thoughts, the defilement and deadness of their consciences, the ebullition of to many hellish lusts, setting mens hearts upon all mischief: Whence is all this, but from sin that dwells in them?

Sin hath made men very *Devils*, set upon all manner of mischief, *Devils against God*, hating, reproaching, blaspheming, cursing, fighting against God: There should quickly be no God, nor Heaven, nor Hell left, if the wickedness of mans heart had power answerable to its malice. *Devils against themselves*, set upon the destruction and damnation of their own souls; there needed not another Devil to attempt and devour them; if God should but let them alone, they would quickly make their destruction sure of themselves. *Devils one against another*: There is not one sinner, but if God should pull up the stones, and let his wickedness have its full course, would do his utmost to damn all the World, enemies, friends, husbands, wives, children, all should be destroyed.

And can there now be a greater evil then this imagined? I, you will say, if all this be true it is a great

great evil indeed; But may be for all these great words there may be no such great matter in it: Why do but consider what sin hath done, and cannot be envied, and then you will see reason to believe all that hath been said: Go to Mount *Calvary*, and see what it hath done there; What was it that slew the Lord of glory, that put Christ to death? Was it not those sins that were laid upon him? These were his *betrayers and murderers*. These were the thorns, the nails, the spear that wounded him, the gall and vinegar that was given him to drink: Let the sweat, the cries, the groans, the blood, the soul that were pressed and poured out by sin, let these speak if too much hath been said.

Turn aside from *Mount Calvary*, and go down to the *Valley of Hinnom*, lay your ear to the mouth of *Tophet*, and hearken what work sin hath done there: What is it that hath filled Hell so full already, that hath sent down *Cain* and *Judas*, *Ananias* and *Saphira*, with those millions of damned Souls that are already tormented in those flames? Did God damn so many Souls for nothing, or for a trifle, inflict so great a torment for a small offence? What is it that hath cast them in thither? Was it their righteousness? was it not their iniquities? If you could step down into those Chambers of Death, and ask those wretched creatures, *Friends, How came you in hither?* What would they answer? *Oh, it is our sins that brought us into this place of torment:* Oh! it was my covetousness brought me hither, would one say: Oh! it was my lying brought me hither saies another: Oh! it was my pride, or my passion, or my wantonness, or my sloathfulness, that brought me hither saies a third: Oh sin, sin! this is it for which we burn, we roar, we rave,

we dye, we dye eternally. Can there be too much said of the evil of sin, that hath done all this mischief?

3. *Spiritual sins are the greatest of sins: Soul pollutions are the most foul pollutions.*

By how much the more excellent the soul is above the body in its nature, by so much the more vile and mischievous, being depraved with sin! The soul of man is the *prime subject* of the *image of God* in man; there was much of God to be seen in the body, or externals of man, but the face of God, the glory of God was stamped upon his soul; the soul being corrupted, it became the *express image of the Devil*: Satan is rudely limb'd, and some darker shadows of him drawn on the outward man, but he is drawn out to the life in the soul; the very face, the heart of Satan, his pride, malice, envy, falsehood is engraven on the heart: A proud heart hath more of the Devil than a proud look; a wanton heart is more vile than a wanton eye; a murderous or adulterous heart, is worse than a murderous or adulterous act. It is true, when Sin is committed without, it is worse than when it sleeps in its causes within; and sin in its birth, is worse than in its bare conception, and the reason is because when sin is committed, there are both parts the outward and the spiritual together, there is the sin of the hand, and the sin of the heart too, to make up the murder: But then, if you should distinctly consider, that which *the heart* hath done towards the murder, and that which *the hand* hath done, the hearts part would appear to be incomparably the worst: The sins of the heart are the *root sin*, the spring that sets all the wheels a going, the fountain that sets all the *streams* a running: the
fire

fire that sets the furnace a smoking: Carnal men make little of outward sin, nothing of spiritual. If they would not be Extortioners, or Oppressors, or Smealers, or Cursers, some of them, yet evil thoughts may lodge in them, Lust may bear the rule in them, Pride, Envy, Ignorance, Atheism, Heart-blasphemy, these are scarcely accounted evils; What are Thoughts, a little inward discontent, anger, and the like, that we should trouble our selves with these? Oh! You do not know what there may be in a Thought, or a secret lust, there may be a Thousand evil Words, and actions, in the bowels of a few evil Thoughts; Lusts are big belly'd, a World of monstrous births are continually springing forth from them: Below, if you should examine all the wickednesses of our lives, Drunkenness, Whoredoms, Lying, Oaths, Perjuries, and ask them one by one, Drunkenness, whence art thou? Adultery, when comest thou? Oaths, Curses, Lyes, whence are all ye? would they not answer with the Apostle, *Come we not hence, even from those lusts that war in your members?* blame not Christians, that they are too much afraid of their own hearts, that they take so much pains, spend so much time about purging, and walking, and watching these, keeping their thoughts, governing their passions, mortifying their lusts; if you do not, they know what there is within them: He that makes nothing of an evil thought, the Devil is like to bring him to something in a little time.

4. *Sin is the root of all misery*; the miseries of this life, of all the diseases, Pains, Torments, tumults, commotions, quarrellings, contentions, Murders, Rapines, Oppressions, Wars, Famine, Poverty,

verity, pestilence, and all sorts of Calamities that
 this world groans under, *Jer. 2. 17. Hast thou not
 procured all these things to thy self? that is, by thine
 iniquities? What a world had this world been had
 it not been for sin? A Paradise, all the world had
 been as the garden of the Lord; How great peace
 had there been, had it not been for this make-bate;
 How great joy, had it not been for this Tormentor;
 How great beauty, and order, had it not been for
 this, which is the deformity and confusion of all
 things! What a world is this become by sin: how
 full of violence! What Lyons, Tygers, Wolves,
 are the Inhabitants thereof become one to ano-
 ther! What thorns and bryars are they, scratching
 and tearing one another! What lying, and slan-
 dering, and defaming, and defrauding, and quar-
 rellings, and fightings, are there broken forth;
 This earth is even almost become an Hell! Whence
 is all this? the Apostle tells us, *James 4. 1. From
 whence come wars, and fighting among you; come
 they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your
 members? Sinners lay the blame of all upon
 righteousness and holiness, and the knowledge
 of God and Conscience, and on such persons as
 exercise themselves in keeping a good Conscience,
 and walking holily, and working righteousness.
 These are the troublers, these are the disturbers,
 these are the fire-brands, that set all in a combusti-
 on, though they little think what it is that here-
 in they say, To impute the trouble of the earth
 to righteousness and holiness, &c. To affirm,
 as many do, it had been a better world, if it had
 not been for so much preaching and praying, and
 professing, and keeping such ado about Consci-
 ence, and the like; is all one as to say, It
 had**

had been a better world if God had not been in fault; we may thank God and his Law; we may thank Christ and his Gospel for all our troubles. But let such blasphemers know, that 'tis themselves and their wicked hearts, their atheism and ignorance, their idolatries and adulteries, their pride and their covetousness, their lewdness and licentiousness, that they owe all their troubles and miseries to, *Lam. 1. Jerusalem hath sinned, therefore is she removed; her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper, her filthiness is yet in her skirts. Job 8. 1. Can a rush grow without mire?*

Now from all this it evidently follows,

1. That no sin can properly be called little.
2. That the Saints mourning for sin, praying, watching, fearing, shunning sin, with its occasions, temptations, and very appearances, are not phantastical, but reasonable services.

Notwithstanding all this evil that is in sin, this is it which carnal men make matter of nothing; *'Tis every mans case,* we are all sinners, and why should we trouble our selves at that which we cannot help; and what a wonder do they make at the poor Saints, that they are so fearful, and so watchful, and so tender, and so much troubled when they fall into sin, counting their fear their folly, and their mourning madness, as if it were a meer Scare-crow, or a Bug-bear, or as if it were nothing but their own melancholick fancies that they thus trouble themselves about? what is it that you are afraid of? why can you not be so free, and take your liberty as well as others? what hurt is there in a little mirth, in a little freedom, to live as other men do? Oh Sinners, if *Samuels Mantle* were taken off from this Devils back

back, and the vail were taken off from your eyes; if you did but see sin as it is, you would cease your wondering.

Is sin nothing? Is enmity against God, his Government, his Being, nothing? Are the fruits of sin nothing? Is poverty nothing? Is sword and famine, and pestilence nothing? Are all the bodily diseases that come upon you, and the torment of them: Is the Gout, and the Stone, and the strangury, and the pains of Child-bearing nothing? Are death and hell and the vengeance of eternal fire, such slight matters? Is the fruit so bitter and deadly, and do you think there is so little hurt in the root? You may as well count these torments, which sin hath brought upon the world, to be *concesses*, or slight matters, as have such *thoughts* of sin.

Whosoever makes nothing of sin, makes light of Christ; whoever fears not, feels not, flies not, mourns not for sin as the most dreadful of evils, regards not God nor his own soul. He that hath so much wit as to dispute sin into a trifle, hath yet but little understanding, and lesse Religion; He that conceits that a cold (*God forgive me*) will make him whole of his inward *Diseases*, or a slight (*I cry God mercy*) will make *amends* for his actual wickedness, if he prove not himself a Phanatick in the end, let the most circumspect Christians passe for Phanaticks now.

Sinners, if you will not yet be convinced; if the Scriptures do not convince you, if your eyes and ears do not teach you to understand *Sins* better, take heed, lest God teach you hereafter, as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, with bryars and thorns with Fire and Brimston, and fetch his proof from
your

your bones, and from your bowels, and cause the revenging worm, when your pangs shall come upon you, to bring back the memory of your sprighted sins upon you thus : *Now sinner, now wretch, what thinkest thou of thy lust now ; of thy pride, and thy jollity, and thy covetousness now ? Where are thy slight thoughts of all this now ? Where's thy vain confidence now, that thou shouldst go out with all this well enough, that thou shouldst escape well enough, that all the threatening and woes denounced against thee, would come to nothing ? Now sinner learn, and be learning this Lesson for ever, what a fool thou hast been in the midst of all thy high conceit and boastings of thy wisdom.*

3. The Doctrine of Redemption is a real Truth: Need I prove this ? That Christ is true ; the true Messiah, true God and true Man ; had a true Body, and a true Soul ; That his sayings were true ; He was a true Prophet ; That his sufferings were true ; He was a true Priest ; That as he was truly dead, so he as truly rose, ascended, and is the Lord, both of the dead and of the living, and is a true King ; That he hath truly and fully accomplished his whole undertaking. Am I speaking to Jews or Pagans, that I need prove this ? Am I not speaking to Christians, who must prove themselves liars, their profession a lye, and their faith vain, if they deny these things ? But wherefore was all this ? What came Christ into the world for ? Wherefore was he born ? Wherefore did he live, dye, rise, ascend ? What was the intent of all this ? Why, it was, to make a total and blessed change upon the miserable condition, of whomsoever of this sinful world shall embrace and give entertainment to him ; 'twas to make this old world new ;
this

this crooked world straight, this miserable world blessed; 'Twas to bring deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, Isa. 61. 1. To make an end of sin, to finish transgression, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, Dan. 9. 24. 'Twas to undo all that mischief which sin and the Devil hath wrought and brought upon this world, 1 John 3. 8. For this cause the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. 'Twas to abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light. 'Twas to redeem from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14. 'Twas that being delivered from our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives, Luk. 1. 74. 75. That they who live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again, 2 Cor. 5. 15. Hereupon sayes the Apostle, Tit. 2. 11, 12. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world. And lastly, to redeem us, 1 Pet. 1. 4. To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. To an inheritance. Christians are now brought out of Egypt, and redeemed from their house of bondage, and then left to shift for themselves, or to perish in the wilderness, they are redeemed to an inheritance, they are a purchased people, and there is for them a purchased possession. 1. An incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, an enduring possession, and an holy habitation. Holiness is a great part of the blessedness of the Saints. Sinners, you

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that despise holiness, despise one of the richest Jew-
els in the Crown of glory. 3. *Reserved in heaven*;
there's the good land where their inheritance lies;
that's the Country which Christ hath purchased for
his ransomed ones; *The whole land is theirs, theirs is
the Kingdom of Heaven.*

This is that Redemption which by the Gospel is
preached unto you; and if Christ had failed of
performing and accomplishing of any of all this,
he had been but an incomplete and imperfect Re-
deemer.

By the way, learn what great reason there is, that
the Gospel should have better entertainment, than
for the most part it meets withal in the world; one
would think, who considers what entertainment it
hath, and the Ministry of it, that it were some dis-
mal word, and a dreadful errand that it came upon;
if Christ had come to destroy the world, could he
have had less welcome? If the Gospel were as the
Law, not only a *dead*, but a *killing Letter*, a *Ministra-
tion of Death and Condemnation*: If the Ministers of
the Gospel had been Messengers sent up from the
bottomless Pit, to *deceive the Nations*, to destroy
Souls, to drag them down to everlasting darkness,
there could hardly have been a greater hate and
out-cry, than there is against it and them. Surely
such a message, and such messengers, deserve bet-
ter welcome, and better usage.

But to our purpose; You have heard what that
Redemption is, which the Gospel brings us.
Now doth Christ do his work by halves? Deliver
out of Prison, and leave his ransomed Ones in
their vile Prison-garments; change their Re-
lations, and never change their Conditions,
redeem them from death, and not redeem them
from

from iniquity? Was this the intent of Christ in dying for sinners; that they might play the beasts and the rebels more securely? Did this grace abound, that sin might super-abound? Doth the law of faith, make void the law of righteousness? Doth it not establish it? What's the import of those several expressions forementioned; *That he might redeem from all iniquity, and purifie a peculiar people zealous of good works, that we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness; that they that live, should not live to themselves, but to him that dyed for them, that denying all ungodliness, &c.* Is not all this included in the redemption which Christ hath wrought? And what doth all this import other, then that godliness we are pleading for? Is this a part of that which Christ hath redeemed us to, and is there nothing in it? Hath Christ sweat, and groaned, and laboured, and travel'd in pain, and all this to bring forth a lye? Hath he dyed to purge, and purifie, and wash, and cleanse his people, and when all comes to all, it is this nothing but a cheat? Did Christ dye but in conceit, and arise and ascend but in conceit? As certain as it is that Christ did not barely personate a Redeemer, so certain it is, that his redeemed do not barely personate Saints. Let all the world be Judges, what honour those persons have for Christ, that have no better opinion of the fruits of his Death. Hence it appears:

1. That the Redemption of a sinner, is the destruction of sin; Christ dyed to save men from their sin, not in them, to redeem from iniquity, all as well as from wrath.

2. That Redemption and Regeneration are linked together: He that is bought from being a slave

He is born a Son; he that is not partaker of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, is not partaker of the Redemption of Christ.

The Doctrine of Redemption by Christ is abused by wilful Sinners, and made to serve as their great Plea against the necessity of Holiness. Convince them of sin, of the necessity of turning, of the danger of continuing, and going on, here they presently take Sanctuary, *Christ died for sinners*; and here they think themselves sufficiently secured, not only against all the threatenings of wrath, but against all exhortations to Holiness; Argue with them from the Command of God, *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification*; cast away your transgressions, *why will ye die? turn and live*; From the threatening of God, *If ye live after the flesh ye shall dye*, &c. Yet this they think will answer all Your Arguments, *Christ died for Sinners*: I put my trust in Christ, that I shall be saved. What? trust in Christ, and not turn to Christ? Hope to be saved by Christ, and refuse to be sanctified? Will Christ redeem those from the Curse, who will not be redeemed from iniquity? *Jen. 7. 9. Will ye steal and murder, and commit Adultery, and swear falsely, &c. And come and stand before me in my House, and say we are delivered, so do all those abominations? Will you do wickedly, walk in all manner of wantonness, lasciviousness, lust, excess, &c. and then come and take hold of a Redeemer, as if you were delivered to do all this wickedness? Is my House become a Den of Robbers? Are the Redeemed of the Lord a generation of Rebels, Enemies of all Righteousness, Lyars, Proud, Covetous, Blasphemers: Are these the followers of the Lamb?*

In true, the Apostle says, *Each one of you*, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Yet he adds, *But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the Name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* Christianity without Godliness, this is a fancy indeed : Let every one that nameth the Lord Jesus depart from iniquity ; either turn from iniquity, or talk no more of Christ : a Christian and an Infidel are not more *Arctas* than a Christian and a Libertine : Take heed sinners, and let not the Gospel undo you, let not Mercy damn you, put not your Faith to do the foul office of infidelity. Beloved, let it never be said while the *Just* live, you must die by your Faith, this is like to be your case, you would never have dared so to have slighted Holiness, and persisted in sin, had it not been for your trust in Christ.

You must count Christ to be no Christ, no Redeemer, or but in half, or deceitful Redeemer, if you count your selves good Christians while you are yet in your sin. You must have another Christ, another Gospel, ere ever you can be saved in your sinful state, Rom. 8. 1. *There is no condemnation to them which are in Jesus Christ, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit :* This is Gospel, wherein you have the Redeemed Charter, and the Redeemed Character : His Charter, *He shall not come into condemnation*, His Character, *He walketh not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* ; that is, *He is a man of a goodly life.* Whom doth the Gospel secure from condemnation ? Why, those that are in Christ. But who are they ? Why, only those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit : those that walk otherwise can have no benefit by the Gospel. You all stand as con-

victed

And malefactors guilty of death, you have sinned, and what have you to say, why you should not dye? And have your sentence of condemnation past upon you? May be you will call for a *Psalm of mercy*, my Book, Lord, my Book, the Gospel will, I hope, secure me. No sinner, thou canst not have it, thou art one that *livest after the flesh*, and canst not have the benefit of the Gospel. This is the Law, and the Gospel says not one word to reverse it; *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall dye*: Christ never intended the benefit of his Redemption to any of you, whether you would repent or no, be holy or no: you may as well write for Gospel this, *He that believeth shall be damned*, as this, *He that obeyeth not the Gospel shall be saved*: And you may as well say, that *sinning is serving of Christ*, as that *those that live after the flesh, obey the Gospel*.

4. The Doctrine of Regeneration is a real truth: There are three things most evident concerning this:

1. That there is such a change, and that necessary to salvation.
2. That this is a great and mighty change.
3. That this is an inward and Soul-change.

1. That there is such a grace as Regeneration, and that necessary to salvation, 1 *Joh. 3. 3. Verily, verily, or truly, truly, or certainly, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

2. That the change that is wrought by Regeneration is a great and a mighty change: it is as
 I 3 great

great as the making something of nothing: Regeneration is a new Creation; it is as great as the raising up of persons from death to life. Regeneration is a Resurrection: *You both be quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. 2.1. There is as great a power, as much of Divinity manifested in quickning a dead soul, as in raising a dead body. When God would confirm the faith of the Jews concerning their Conversion and Restauration, after their cutting off, which the Apostle tells us shall be a *life from the dead*, he evidences that he was able to accomplish it by his making dry bones to live: *Ezek. 37.3. Can these bones live? Son of man, prophesy unto these bones, say unto them, Oh ye dry bones hear the word of the Lord!* 'Twas a strange service the Prophet was put upon, but yet he prophesies; and behold there was a great shaking, and bone came to his bone, and they were covered with sinews, and with flesh, and the breath of life was breathed into them and they stood upon their feet a great Army: *These bones, saith the Lord, are the house of Israel and Judah.* That is, as they lay in their state of rejection from God, and if the Lord could not have made the bones to live, he had failed of his confirmation of their faith, touching the Redemption of this dead people.

When the Ministers of the Gospel are sent forth to preach to sinners, it is even as likely a service, as if they had been sent among the Tombs and the Graves, to prophesy to the Skulls, and the Bones, and the dust of the dead? And if there were not a Divine and Almighty power accompanying their Ministry, their success would be the same, as if they had been preaching the bea

the field into Men; or of Stone: attempting to raise
Children unto Abraham.

It is an Inward Soul-change: Regeneration is
uniting of dead Souls to Christ, Gal. 4. 19. *My
dear Children, of whom I travel in birth, until Christ
be formed in you: Here note three things.*

1. That the result of this union with Christ, is
new Life, 1 John 3. 12. *He that hath the Son hath
Life, Generatio unius est corruptio alterius.*

In this Generation there is a Death and a
Life.

1. A Death, Colos. 3. 3. *You are dead, that is,
your sins are dead, your old man is dead; Our old
man is crucified with him, Rom. 6.*

2. A Life: There is new sense and motion,
there is a living power communicated to souls uni-
ted to Christ; whereby they are enabled to move
and act in such an holy, spiritual and heavenly
way, as was impossible before. Grace is a living
thing, that spirits, and animates all the Faculties
new, that puts life into all the duties and perfor-
mances of the Saints; which though for the mat-
ter of them they might have been done before, yet
they were but the dead carcasses of duties, rather
than the things themselves.

2. This new Life is a new Nature; the Saints
participation of the Nature of Christ; a change
of the qualities of the soul: they are new Crea-
tures that have passed the new Birth: The second
Adam as well as the first brings forth his Chil-
dren in his own likeness: The divine Birth is
the bringing forth of the divine Nature: 2 Pet.
1. 4. *As they said vainly, the Gods are come down
in the likeness of men: It may be here said truly;*

Men are raised up in the likeness of God, renewed after his Image, made partakers of his holiness. Those that put any thing less in this charge than the new creature, make Regeneration to be as very a contradiction as the Popish Transubstantiation. Bread is made a God, and yet bread is still : a brute is made a Saint, and yet remains a brute still. A God under the accidents of bread, and a Saint under the qualities of a Swine.

3. This new nature is a *glorious nature*, comprehending in it that *divine light*, whereby the Saints are enabled to understand and look into the depths of eternity, the invisible things of God, the mysteries of the glorious Gospel, that *divine love*, and faith, and hope, and the whole train of glorious graces, together with those *principles of righteousness*, *Wisdom*, *Truth*, *Mercy*, *Charity*, &c. whereby they are made capable of injoying fellowship and communion with God, of bearing his Name, shewing forth his Vertues and Praises before the world, and doing his will : In sum, it is the Image of God, the Epistle of Christ written upon the Tables of their hearts : And thus much those Scriptural expressions, *New creatures*, *partakers of the Divine Nature*, *partakers of his holiness*, *children of light*, with the like, do signify and import.

What a strange piece of vanity should we make of the Scriptures, if all these high and various expressions should signify no more than that empty and pitiful thing that carnal men do count their Religion, or godliness, that ever that ignorant, Sottish, formal, brutish generation, which have no more of the knowledge of God than an Heathen, no more of the life of God than

than a Stock, no more of Religion, than to say
over a Prayer by rote; So far from being parta-
ckers of the new Nature that they know not whe-
ther there be any such thing, or what it is: That
ever such a blind, senseless multitude should be
imagined to be the persons whom the Scripture
means, by *new Creatures, the Children of God, the
Children of Light, the Images of God*: Much more
that those that live after the flesh, who are proud,
covetous, sensual, filthy, beastly in their conversa-
tions, yet if they have been baptized, and passed
under that sacramental Regeneration, and do but
say, now and then, *I repent, or God forgive me*, that
these also are the children of God, and have all
that new Birth which is necessary to their seeing
the Kingdom of God, Who can with any colour of
reason imagine? Such as can make themselves be-
lieve this, have made such a forfeiture of their un-
derstandings, that they may be like in time to be-
lieve, that *the Devil is God, and that Hell is Heaven*;
and may even take up the Alcoran for their Bible,
and let the Scriptures go for a Fable.

Sinners, consider with your selves, is there any
such thing as the new Birth? Can there be a New
Birth, without a New Life? Doth Christ bring forth
Dead Children, or do dry bones live? Doth the
Gospel bring forth *monstrous births*, Children with-
out eyes, without an head, without an heart, or
with the heart of a beast under the face of a man?
Doth it bring forth *Serpents, Vipers, Dogs, Swine*,
for its Children, and must the Kingdom of Heaven
be peopled with such Inhabitants as these? If
these be the Children of the Kingdom, where or
who are the Children of this World? are the *Na-
gians*, the *Israelites* indeed, in whom there is

Are these the true seed, and the Saints
 spurious? are these the sons, and the Saints bastards?

Or if you will let these vile ones of the earth go
 as none of the seed, take the best of carnal men, that
 have the fairest face of Religion, and form of holi-
 ness, without the in-side, the new nature; are these
 they? Is the shadow the substance, and the sub-
 stance but a shadow? To say that the inward life
 of godliness, the spirit and soul of Christianity, is
 but a conceit, and this out-side is all, this Christi-
 anity is as good reason, as to affirm, that a picture
 is a man, and that a living man is but a picture; and
 as good Divinity as I my self heard Preached at Ox-
 ford, about thirty years since, by a zealous Advo-
 cate, for the lawfulness of Sports on the Lords
 Day; who Preaching about the observation of the
 Sabbath, and distinguishing betwixt the Substanti-
 als, and the Circumstantial duties of that day, said,
*That Preaching is a Religious Ceremony; Praying is a
 Religious Ceremony, but bowing at the Name of Jesus,
 standing at the Creed and Gospel, Holy and Religious
 Feasting, Holy and Religious Dancing; these are the
 Substantials.* Hence it follows,

1. That Regeneration is not a *Suppositious* change,
 or the counterfeit of a change; there is some dif-
 ference hereby put betwixt persons and persons;
 the Regenerate and the Unregenerate are not one
 and the same; no more than the living and the
 dead.

2. It is not a bare *Relative* change, as Justification
 and Adoption are held to be; there is a change of
 nature wrought by it, and not barely of Relation.

3. It is not a *Superficial* change, or merely out-
 ward that goes only skin-deep; it is not, as was
 said concerning Baptism, *only the washing away*

of the filth of the flesh, the cleaning of the out-side, and leaving lust to reign within: Regeneration is the change of the man, and not barely of the manner.

4. In this change we may read all godliness, we may read the use of things very much in their beings; we may know wherefore they are much the better, if we understand what they are; Gods expectations may be read in his operations; we may understand much of our work, by observing Gods work upon us: As God, in making men *living souls*, does thereby tell us, he expects other things from them, than from dead *stocks and stones*; and in making them *reasonable souls*, intimates, that he expects they should live other lives than *dogs or swine*, so in making them Christians, making them partakers of the Divine Nature, he makes it evident, that he expects they should live another life than *other men*.

The new life, or life of godliness, may be read in our new birth, or new natures: The Regenerate are said, *Eph. 2. 10. To be created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that they should walk in them: Created, unto good works*, that notes two things.

1. Intended to good works.

2. Fitted to good works.

1. That in their new making, they were intended to good works, this was Gods minde and meaning; he fore-ordained that they should walk in them: He did not set up such a light in man to be put under a bushel; he bestowed not such a talent on man, to be bound up in a Napkin.

2. That in their new making, they were fitted.

ted to good works, created to good works; that is, they were brought forth in such an holy nature, indued with such a Divine light, such holy principles, powers, affections, dispositions, and inclinations, as fitted them for an holy active life; And this Divine, and excellent structure of this new creature, do both signifie what life it is intended to; and that this life to which it is intended, is indeed an excellent life; there is something sure in this godly life; God did not new make men for nothing; and something of worth and real excellency, or else he would not have been at such cost in preparing men for it; if there were no other godly life, than that which the carnal world count godliness, there needed no new Creation to fit men for it. What is there in the whole frame of the Religion of the vulgar, but a carnal man may reach to? For the devotional part of it, *Saying, or hearing of a prayer, observing of dayes, rites and customes, &c.* What great difficulty is there in that? *May not a Publican do the same?* Yes, *may not a Harlot, a Drunkard, an Idiot do the same?* Such devotions will neither disturb their lusts, nor yet will their lusts distate or disable such devotions; and for the righteousness of it, *to love those that love them, to be good neighbours, to be no Extortioners, no Adulterers, &c.* there is not so very much in that, *do not even the Pharisees do the same? What do you more than others?* said Christ to his Disciples. What singular or excellent thing do you? God hath done singularly well by you; you are fearfully and wonderfully made (as is true of the natural, so much more of your new birth) and curiously wrought, not in the lower parts of the earth, but in the highest heavens; you are

are born from above, God hath done more for you than for others; what do you more than others? Some it may be would have answered, What do you more than others? Why, there's no more to be done, all that's done more than others do, is meer fancy or conceit: But beloved, when you look upon that sapless, lifeless empty way of Religion, which others are content with, methinks your reasons should demand, What hath God new-made me, made me partaker of the Divine Nature, of the life of God, for no more but this? hath God given such a glorious Gospel, raised up such a mighty Saviour, who hath shed such precious blood, sent forth such a glorious spirit, given commission to such multitudes of heavenly Ambassadors, to Preach, persuade, beseech, exhort, to travel in birth with me, till Christ hath been formed in me, and all this, to bring me to no better a life than this? Surely there is something farther, that the Lord hath been at all this cost, and built this structure for.

Study this new birth, study the new Creation more thoroughly, and if you see not the most holy, heavenly, spiritual conversation that is pleaded for radically and seminally in the bowels of it, then let godliness pass for a fancy for ever. Let the Regenerate but live according to their new nature, and if that be not the very godly life we contend with you about, then call us what you will.

5. Faith is no fancy, *Hebr. 11. 1. Faith is the ground, or the subsistence of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* It hath a sure foundation on which it's bottom'd, that sure word of promise, *2 Pet. 1. 19. To the which (saith the Apostle) ye do well, that ye take heed.* There is a believing on Christ

Christ for Salvation, and believing that we shall be saved by *Christ*; the former is called the *direct* act of faith, and is the Souls accepting of Christ for Lord and Saviour, and an adventuring, and resting upon him for life; this is founded on the Rock of Ages, on the veracity and faithfulness of that God that cannot lye, who hath said, *John 3. 16. Whosoever believeth on his Son, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* The latter, in the Saints, is called, *The Reflex of Faith*, and hath its Foundation, partly on the Word of God without them, partly on the Work of God within them: And this Faith, or rather this Act of Faith, if the former hath been first put forth, is such also, as will never deceive. As those that trust in God, because they have the Word and Oath of God, in which two immutable things, it is impossible for God to lye, shall not be confounded, but have strong consolation: So those that believe they shall be saved, because they find their hearts purified; who believe that their names are written in Heaven, because they find the Law and Image of God written, and engraven in their hearts; who believe that they shall not come into condemnation, because they are in Christ, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, who believe they shall overcome death, because they have overcome the World; that they shall reap in mercy, because they have sown in righteousness; that they shall reap in joy, because they have sown in tears; that they shall receive the inheritance of Sons, because they have received the Adoption of Sons; who finding themselves firmly knit and joynd to the Lord, are persuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers,

nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord. Those, that on such grounds as these, believe they shall be saved, it shall certainly be unto them, according to their faith; if it be thus with them indeed; if they be in Christ; if they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; if their hearts be purified, &c. The Word of the Lord stands good and sure to them, that they shall not come into condemnation; and they shall as infallibly be saved, as if their particular names had been written in the promises: The veracity of God stands as firmly engaged to make good conditional promises, where the condition is fulfilled, as if the promise had been absolute.

There is a faith which is a meer fancy. The faith of Enthusiasts, who believe upon unscriptural Revelations; who believe above and besides what is written; the faith of Ignorants, whose belief is (according to the Athenians' worship) on the unknown God; the faith of Idlers, who believe they shall rest with Christ though they never laboured with him: The faith of the profane, who believe they shall be saved, though they be not sanctified, such faith is meer fancy; opinion or presumption you may call it rather than faith: You that are ignorant, idle, profane, and unsanctified, and yet believe you shall be saved, you believe a lye; you believe that which God hath never said shall be; nay, you believe that which God hath said shall never be, *Jer. 17. 11.* They are a people of no understanding, therefore be that made them will not save them.

them, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Such shall never inherit the Kingdom of God. Hear sinners, hear, God must be a lyar, or your faith a lye.

But the faith of God's Elect, such as hath been before described, this is that precious tryed faith, by which whosoever believes shall not be confounded, Christians, you that have obtained such precious faith, a Christ-imbracing faith, an heart-purifying, a flesh-mortifying, a world-conquering faith, you may venture safely upon it; if ever this faith deceive you, God hath deceived you, the Scriptures have deceived you, Christ hath deceived you, who hath prayed (and we may be bold to turn Christ's prayer into a promise) that this faith fail not; let the Phanatick world laugh, and mock, and call your consolations delusions, your confidence conceit, or what they will, let them alone, you must give losers leave to talk and laugh; yet, *cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.*

6. The Doctrine concerning *Good Works*, contains truth: In this I shall shew,

First, What we are to understand by *Good Works*; A good work in general, is an holy, or gracious action; to the making up whereof these four things are necessary.

1. The principle must be good from which it proceeds, it must be from an honest and upright heart, for a pure conscience, from faith unfeigned, &c. *Mat. 12. 35. 1 Tim. 1. 5.*

2. The matter must be good; something that is commended, *Micah 6. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of*

of the 1st Jhs. 29. 13. Their fear towards us, was taught by the precepts of men.

3. The form or manner of doing must be good, it must be well done; this takes in the consideration of all its circumstances, of time, place, &c.

4. The end must be good, it must be done to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31.

As to the particular kinds of *Good Works*, they are not easily to be reckon'd up: The *Rapists* talk little of any *good works*, but the exercises of *bounty and liberality*, in giving Alms, feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, visiting and relieving the afflicted, building of Alms-houses, Colledges, and the like; upon which they insist so much, as if there were scarce any other *good works*, but such as these; but we may not confine them within so narrow a compass. *Good works* do signifie the same with a good life, or a godly life; the doing and observing all things which God hath commanded us: Our living holily, honestly, circumspectly, fruitfully, imports the same with our doing good works; the exercising of all the graces of Christ, faith, love, hope, &c. The subduing and mortifying of lust and corruption, the governing our hearts, the governing our tongues, the ordering of our carriage towards God, and towards men; all acts of Religion, Righteousness, Mercy, Charity, Praying, Fasting, Hearing, Sanctifying the Sabbath, Lending, Giving, Forgiving, Peace-making, Instructing, Exhorting, Reproving, Denying our selves, taking up our Cross, following Christ, Fighting the good fight of Faith, laying up treasure in heaven, and the like: these are good works; every thing is a *good work*, concerning which

which God will say at last, *Well done good and faithful Servant* : In all these the Lord requires,

1. That we act, *Ad extremum virium*, to our utmost, *Eccles. 9. 10.* *What thine hand findeth to do, and so what thy head, or thy heart findeth to do, do it with thy might*, *Tir. 2. 14.* *Zealous of good works*, *Rom. 12. 14.* *Not sloathful in business, but servant in spirit, serving the Lord*, *Col. 3. 10.* *Fruitful in good works*, *1 Cor. 15. ult.* *Abounding in the work of the Lord.*

2. That we act in these, *Ad extremum vite* ; to the end of our dayes, *Dent. 6. 2.* *Fear the Lord thy God, and keep all his statutes, and his Commandments all the dayes of thy life.*

3. That we be doing, *Per totum vitam cursum*, without intermission ; there must not only be well-doing, but a continuance in well-doing, *Rom. 2.* God will not have any Chasms or vacancies in our lives, but every day must be filled up with the duties of it ; Christians must not think of getting to heaven, *per saltum*, they must not leap, but walk ; they must not leap over a duty, nor leap over a day, *nulla dies sine linea*. The Law of God doth not allow a day to sin, nor abate us one dayes work. To demand a twatching time from the service of God, is to desire so much time for the service of sin. We are ever serving one Master, or the other, we are certainly serving sin, when we are not in one way or other, serving the Lord.

Secondly, That good works are necessary. Necessary to salvation ; so as though we are not like to be saved by our works, yet we cannot be saved without them. He that works not, shall not eat bread

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rest in the Kingdom of God. The everlasting
rest is not for joyterers, but for labourers, *Mat.*
7. 21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall
enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the
Will of my Father which is in heaven. Faith cannot
save us without works: The Apostle tells us, *1 am. 2.*
26. Faith without works is dead, and a dead faith
cannot bring us to life. Therefore the Apostle Paul
so vehemently charges, *Tir. 3. 8. This is a faith-*
ful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm
constantly, that they which have believed in God may
be careful to maintain good works, for these things are
good and profitable to men. Where observe the
Preface to the charge, *This is a faithful saying,*
that is, a true saying, and a great truth, a wor-
thy saying, worthy to be delivered, worthy to be
received, *And these things, I will that thou affirm*
constantly, or teach constantly or strenuously, or re-
solvedly, be not beaten off from it. Why, what is
this great truth? Why, this is it, *That they which*
have believed in God, as ever they would that their faith
should stand them in any stead, must be careful to main-
tain good works: not only to do good works, but
not to cease, to maintain, or to excel and abound in
good works, these things are good and profitable
to men.

Now let me demand of all the world, where lies
the Phanaticisme in any of all this? Which of these
Doctrines is it that is but a conceit? Is it this, that
Christians must not onely be believers, but must do good
works? Is it this, *That they must work with all their*
might; that they must be doing to the end of their
dayes, that they must continue at their work without
intermission (that is) that they must bestow none

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of their time on the Devil, but all on God? Or is this the conceit, *That this well-doing is necessary to our well-being?* Let this be granted, that there is no fancy in all this, and I have at once dispatched my whole undertaking, and if I had no more to say, have sufficiently made it good to you; that strict godlinesse is no fancy. For this doctrine of good works, which I have laid before you; *this is Godlinesse*, godlinesse in the greatest severity and strictnesse of it; grant a necessity of such a life as this, and you grant all that is desired. And can any of this be denied? Must we serve the Lord? To be doing good is the same with serving God. Must we serve the Lord only, and wholly, may not sin claim a share, and now and then something to be done for the Devil? Must we serve the Lord with all our might, or may less serve? Consider that Scripture, *Luke 17. 10. When you have done all that you can, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done no more than is our duty to do.* When we have given unto God all that we owe him, then let the flesh and the Devil take the rest.

Beloved, consider what I have said, and observe whether all that diligence, faithfulness, zeal, tenderness, and preciseness, which the strictest Christians either do or profess, be not included in these three things, to serve the Lord with all our might, to the end of our dayes, and in a constant and continued course of godliness.

Christians: now that you see that little weight or reason hitherto there appears in this charge of the world against us, let us be encouraged to hold fast, and hold on our holy course; let our practises be exact according to our principles, and let our principles alone to plead for themselves; God will plead

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plead for them against all the world: Let us not
give occasion to evil men to charge us with looseness,
and then we may give them leave to charge us with
overmuch strictness.

But oh! how much reason have we to blame our-
selves on the one hand, whilst they injuriously
blame us on the other: Too strict, too precise, too
painful in the work of the Lord? Oh, how sad, de-
ficient rather are we! How spare are our duties!
how little is our care: how uneven are our goings!
We need not fear any excess where we feel so many
defects. Oh how scanty are our services for our
God, how barren are our fields, how thin do our
good fruits spring up? Sinners charge us with our
barrenness, and we will joyn with you in the charge.
The Lord pardon us, it is but little that we have
brought forth; our good fruits are but like the
gleanings of the harvest, here and there an ear, or
a poor handful: or like the gleanings of the Olive tree;
Is. 17. 6. *Two or three berries in the top of the uppermost-
bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches.*
Blessed be God for any thing, but woe to us
that there is no more: it is but here a little and there
a little, here a line and there a blank, that we have
to shew. Oh how many Chasms and Vacuities are
there to be found in our course? how many empty
hours, and empty dayes have we lived, concerning
which, if we should have asked, *Anima quid
fecisti bodie*, Soul, what account canst thou give
of this dayes work? Instead of giving in our *Bill*
we must give in a *Blank*, and write down nothing
but *Perdidi Perdidi*, I have lost a day more. Oh
Brethren, let us take heed of giving in any,
more such blank accounts, lest from our *Perdidi* we
should at last come to write down *Perii, perii*, I am
lost,

lost, I am undone, I have lost so much time, that now I am afraid I have lost my Sou'.

Beloved, whilst others bespatter our diligence, let us bewaile our negligence, let us bewail it and amend. If to be strict, and watchful, and fruitful, be to be vile, and foolish, let us resolve with that holy King. *We will be more vile then this*; we will be more foolish then this, if this be folly: whilst men charge us, that our Religion is fancy, we have no such way to vindicate it, and prove it a reality, but by being more Religious, more strictly so, more fruitfully so, our fruitfulness in good works will be the proof of our sincerity, and will silence our adversaries calumnies.

Object. But is there so much in this Doctrine of good works, and all necessary to Salvation, who then can be saved? May not a good will serve to make up the defects of good Works? *We have heard that God accepts the will for the deed and we hope, that though we have done little, yet that this will be accepted, that we have a willing minde.*

Sol. Though this be a truth, and may administer comfort to Christians in many cases, that a willing minde is accepted with God, where there is little done: yet because it hath been by divers much mistaken and abused, and this mistake hath probably proved fatal to many a Soul, being made use of to serve for an excuse of a lazy heart and barren life: give me leave before I proceed any farther, to turn aside a little, and make some stay upon the consideration hereof, and to shew you in what sense the will may be accepted where the work is not done.

There is a question put amongst the School-men, whether a will to sin where the Act follows not, contracts not as great a guilt in the sight of God, as both

both the will and the Act: and *Durandus* determines it thus. The reason why the will to sin brings not forth the Act, may be twofold, either *Propter incompletam & imperfectam voluntatem*, because the will is not so fully and peremptorily resolved & set upon it, or else, *Propter impedimentum aliquod*, because though the will be fully resolved upon it, yet there is something that hinders the execution, as it may be, want of power, or opportunity to commit it: now in the first case says he, where the reason of the not acting the sin, is the incompleateness of the Will: there the will without the act is not as great a sin as the will and act together: but if the will were so fully resolved, that it would have brought forth the act, if it had not been hindered, there the guilt is as great, if the sin be not committed, as if it had been committed.

There may be use of this to the determining the present question: where there is a will to perform a duty, and yet it is not done, if the reason of the failing be not from the incompleateness of the will, but from some unavoidable hinderance, there the will is accepted, as if the work had been done: where the will is so strongly set upon a duty, as that it would have brought forth the performance, had it not been for some invincible hinderance, it shall not fail of acceptance; the reason is, because where the defect is not in the will God hath the heart, and whereforever God hath the heart, there is certain acceptance with God; where the heart is engaged against any particular lust, and is resolved upon it, this lust must mortifie, and through the help of God will seek its destruction, though it cannot yet compass it. Yet this resolution evidences, that the heart is on Gods side; it doth not side with lust against God, but sides with God against lust, and so in all other the

like cases, 2 Cor. 8. 12. *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not*: He that gives according to what he hath, he that does according to what he hath, and does it heartily, shall be accepted undoubtedly. It may be thy case may be such sometimes, that *to will* may be all thou hast towards a Duty: As for instance, when thou hast a will to shew mercy, to give an Almes, if thou hast nothing to give, thy will is all thou hast. 'Tis true, there may be mistakes, and we are too apt to such mistakes, to impute our failings in duty to want of ability, when they are from want of will. How ordinarily do men thus excuse their grossest neglects, even when they yield themselves over to an universal, careless, and idle life, wherein there is not the least care or pains taken to please or follow God? Why, *I do what I can, I can do no more than I can*. I would live a better life, but *I cannot*, when yet the will is onely in fault, though you can do more than you can, yet if you had a good will to it, you might do more than you do.

But still the great question is to be, How may I know (in case of failings of performance) whether my will be so fully set upon my duty, that there would be performance, if it were not hindred, if it were not for want of power or opportunity? I answer,

1. There is no pleading want of ability to excuse a total neglect of godliness; if the pretence be, of want of ability to live a godly life in general; *I am willing to live a godly life, but cannot*, there 'tis certain the defect is in the will; the Spirit of Sanctification, is a Spirit of power, and where the will is once savingly renewed by that mighty Spirit,

in, there is certainly such a power communicated, as will infallibly bring on the soul to follow God in a course of Godliness, whatever particular weaknesses and failings there may be, 2 Tim. 1. 7. *God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*, Jer. 42, 20, 21. *Ye dissemble in your hearts when you sent me to the Lord your God, saying, pray for us, and whatsoever the Lord our God shall speak, we will do it.* Here was a fair promise, what could be said more? *whenever the Lord shall say, we will do*; and like enough they might have some intention to it; but says the Prophet, *Ye dissemble with me all the while*; why, how does that appear? why, in the next verse, says he, *I have this day declared it to you, but you have not done any thing, for which the Lord your God sent me to you.* If your hearts had been right, there would have been something done, but you have done nothing.

Beloved, you that say you fain would follow God; but cannot; you would fain live a godly life, but do nothing towards it; you would willingly leave off your worldly life, or your fleshly life, or your idle life, you would fain leave off your drinking, and gaming, and wantonness, and betake your selves to praying, and repenting, and denying your selves, and minding your souls, and the things of eternity, but you are not able; the meaning is this, you are not willing, you cannot find in your hearts to take up such a course, you have some *velleities*, some *wishes*, and weak inclinations to godliness, but no will to it; if there were a willing mind within, doubtless there would be some sign of it in your course without.

2. For particular duties, when we are willing to

them, and yet fall short of performance, we may know, that the will would bring forth the acts, were it not for some great impediments, 1. When the non-performance of duty brings forth sorrow and trouble of heart; when it is a grief of mind to us that we cannot doe what we would, Rom. 7. 18, 19, 24. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I finde not, the good that I would doe, &c. Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.* That which hindred him was a sore burthen to him, under which he groans, and passionately wishes for his redemption and deliverance from it; those who in case of failings are quiet, and well enough contented, much more, those who are glad of an excuse, as too often 'tis to be observed in many, who when they are put upon difficult or displeasing Duties, are glad they have so much to say for themselves, that they are not able or have not opportunity; 'tis an argument, that little would have been done, had they had never so great ability.

2. When if we cannot doe the duty, we do what we can towards it. A man that's poor, and can't give an alms to his Brethren in distresse, yet he can pity them, pray for them, make their case known to others that can relieve them; if he do not what he can, if he do not open his bowels to them, though he cannot open his hand, though he had never so much, his poor brother would be like to be little the better. The poor Widow, that cast in her Mite into the Treasury, which was all she had; 'twas a sign she had a large heart, though she gave so small a gift, 1 King. 8. 17. David had it in his heart to build an House for God and yet did it not; the Lord hindred him. How may it be known that David would indeed (if he

might) have built it? why, by this it appeared, though he might not do it, yet he did what he might towards it; though he might not build, yet he prepared materials for the building. If thou art but a babe in Christ, hast had but a little time, hast yet but a little understanding, a little strength; though thou canst not follow the Lord in such exactnesse, not attain to such a fruitful life, as those that are grown and experienced Christians have attained to, yet if whilst thou art *but a child*, thou dost follow the Lord *as a child*, according to the measure of thine understanding and ability, thou art yet unskillful, and performest thy duties in a broken manner, but yet thou dost perform them; thou art *weak* as a child, but yet art *tractable* as a child, willing to be led where thou canst not go: if it be thus with thee, thou needst not be discouraged; he that whilst he is but a child, does follow God as a child according to his measure, 'tis a sign that if he were a man, he would follow him as a man.

If you labour under any lust, or violent passion, which it may be flows from your *natural complexion*, or bodily constitution, which whenever its moved and stirred, you are not able to stand before it; and notwithstanding, you know it is your duty to mortifie and crucifie it, yet still this is your case, that though it be matter of great grief to you, and as a continual thorn in your flesh, and it be the longing desire of your soul to have it destroyed, yet you can do little to it; in this case,

1. If your will to be rid of it, bring forth a continuall watching and praying against it; if you cannot overcome it, yet you are fighting against it; it will live in you, yet you will not let it live in peace with you, especially if,

2. Your

Your striving again, it be not altogether without success, but brings forth some actual restraint of it, as to those outward acts by which it would vent itself; as if you can't overcome passion, yet you restrain in some measure your tongue from uttering it in any angry words; or if you cannot overcome your inward pride, yet you do forbear those self-exalting words, and vain boastings, &c. by which that lust is fomented; if your heart be so set against it, that it thus strives against the lust within, and does ordinarily restrain some of its outward actings, you may be sure, that if you could have your will, it should not be suffered to lodge one night more within you.

If you have a sloathful heart, and are naturally, or by occasion of any bodily distemper, dull, heavy, and inactive, and are still wishing for a more active, lively spirit; but cannot attain it; yet though your heart be heavy and sleepy, you will not let it sleep in quiet, but are frequently jogging, and awakening it, by the most stirring and quickning considerations; if you endeavour to serve the Lord with the best you have, if what you want in quickness and sprightfulness, you labour to make up in seriousness, though you make on by a slow pace, yet you do go on, why, then know that you have to do with a God, that knows and considers your frame, and in this case also will accept you, according to what you have, and not according to what you have not.

3. If there be some Duties that you are unable to, yet if you be faithful in others, that you can do; if you have not an alms, to give to one that's poor, yet you can give counsel to him, and therein shew kindness to his soul; if you can't
so

so well compose your thoughts to any fixed meditation, but are unavoidably perplexed with confuseness and distractions, yet you can pray, or you can spend the more time in reading; do you do that? If you cannot so profitably, or to so much spiritual advantage, improve Christian society, do you do the more in private, in your more retired and immediate converse with God? If you want courage or boldness to appear for God, in exhorting or reproving others, especially such as are above you, yet you have families wherein you can be bold; what do you do there? to your Children, to your servants? Do you instruct them, warn and reprove them, &c. though (as before) you can't extend mercy to others in their needs (having not wherewithal) yet are you just, and righteous and honest, and peaceable in your dealings with, and carriage towards all? If you are just, and would be merciful, if you had wherewithal? if you are profitable in your conversing with your families, and would be so to others, if you could get up to courage and boldness: if you are serious, and spiritual, and affectionate in secret, and have a will to be so in society that's an Argument, that your will would bring forth performance there also, if it were not hindered.

4. If at such times, when there are not such impediments, we then do, what at another time we cannot; that which we cannot do at some times, as in sickness, or in times of desertion or temptation, may be done at another time, when we are not under such disadvantages.

Now gather up all these together, and then the question will easily be determined.

He that hath a will to walk in all the Duties of
God;

godlinesse; he that does ordinarily walk in the practice of those holy duties, which he hath power to do: he that doeth what he can towards those duties which he cannot fully reach to; he that mourns and is grieved in his heart under his failings, this man may have ground to conclude, that his spirit is sincerely willing, though his flesh be weak, and that this willing mind is accepted with God, as if it did really perform: But now, those that pretend to have a good will to godlinesse, but yet in their general course, are carnal & carelesse, and there's little or nothing of a godly life to be seen: those that do not what they can, that do not endeavour to do what they cannot, that do not mourn under their failings, but are contented and quiet, and satisfie themselves in this, that their will is good, and that God accepts their will for the deed: such as these do but deceive themselves, and are not upright before God, nor accepted with him.

7. The Doctrine of the last Judgement, and the different rewards that shall then be rendred to those that are sincerely godly, and all others in the world, is no fancy, but a real truth. I am dealing with *Pharisees*, not with *Sadduces*, and therefore shall not need to prove either the Resurrection or Judgement: My main businesse here, will lye in the proof of the latter part, That the sincerely godly, shall have in the Judgement, a far different reward from all other men.

That God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness; I hope you will give me leave to believe, that you are already satisfied in it; When all the men of this world shall have run their course; when the Courtly

Callants, and the ruffling Royalty; when the proud Minions, and wanton Mimicks, shall have acted their glorious parts; when the trampled and condemned Christians shall have all run their wear Race; when the last Scene shall be over, the Stage cleared, the Curtains drawn; when the beggars Rage, and the great men's Robes; when the Warriors Swords, and States-men Gowns shall be put off and laid aside, and the poor oppressed shall stand upon even ground with their mightiest oppressors; when the Kings of the Earth shall have laid down their Crowns, and the Princes their Scepters; when the Judges of the earth shall have broken up their Courts, and their term is ended; then shall the God of glory erect his Tribunal; before which, all persons, from the least to the greatest, must make their personal appearance, have all their ways and actions examined, and considered over again, and receive their doom: *Then shall men return, and discern betwixt the righteous and the wicked; betwixt him that served the Lord, and him that served him not; Then shall men say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous (a peculiar reward) doubtlesse he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

If you ask, What shall this reward of the righteous be? and what shall be the difference betwixt theirs, and the rewards of all others whatsoever? Let these following Scriptures be examined, and give in the answer, *Rom. 2.6,7,8,9. Who will render to every man according to their deeds, to them, who by patient continuing in well doing, seek for glory, honour and immortality, eternal life, but to them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousnesse, indignation, and wrath, tribulation*

tion and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentiles.

The words refer to the last Judgment, as appears by the former part of them; *Who shall render*, &c. In the following part, we have the dividing of the Sheep from the Goats; which are both described, and have their distinct rewards appointed to them.

1. We have a description of the Sheep, and what their reward shall be; and by their description, these Sheep should be the very same with *Precisians*, or circumspect Christians:

1. They are such as seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; that is, that seek for a portion of glory and immortality in the world to come: They leave the Kingdoms of this world to be shared among the men of this world, and seek for that Kingdom which cannot be shaken.

2. They are well-doers, good men, and holy men, men of a good and holy life.

3. They continue in well-doing, they are not good for a fit, but it is the way of their life.

4. They patiently continue: Patience is either,

1. Of Labour, they do not complain, nor are weary of their work; but buckle to it. Or,

2. Of Sufferings; they can bear as well as do.

Or,

3. Of Delay; they are content to stay for their reward till hereafter; let others take their portions and their rewards here, they are content to stay for theirs till hereafter.

This is the description of the Sheep; and of all the men in the world, who should these Sheep be: Can they be any other men than these godly men, that have

have been laid open to you? Well, but what is the
Reward, which in the Judgement the Lord will ren-
der to these? Why, it is eternal Life, eternal Glo-
ry and blessedness: to them *that by patient continu-
ance in well-doing, &c.* he will render eternal Life.
This is true, Sinners, this is no conceit, it is a cer-
tain truth, and such a truth as you your selves must
be iere, before ever you can come to good. *Heb. 12. 6.*
He that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that
he is a rewarder of them that (diligently) seek him. Mark
it, of them that (*diligently*) seek him. They are
the same men you see, that are spoken of here,
and in the former Scripture: of these God is the re-
warder; that is, with a special and glorious reward,
that is necessary to be understood. God hath rewards
for the ungodly: You that are proud, & persecutors,
and despisers of God, and his wayes, God will
reward you all for all your doings, but he hath a
blessed reward for those that seek him: And thus
saith the Text, *Every one that cometh to God must be-
lieve.* Sinners you will not be perswaded now but
these people are foolish, self-deluding people, and
that the Heaven, the Joy, the Glory, and the Blessed-
ness they feed themselves with the hope of, is only in
their own fancies: but yet, if ever you come to any
thing, if ever you be brought home to God, this is
that which you (must) believe, That God is a Rewar-
der, and a glorious Rewarder of them that *diligently*
seek him. Thus we have the description of the Sheep,
and of their reward, and the certainty therof; next we
have the description of the Goates and their reward,
of them there is a general description, *The men*
that do evil, and this threefold particular description.

1. The

1. They are contentions.

2. They obey not the Truth: But,

3. They obey unrighteousness. which for methods sake I shall reduce to two Heads:

They are described;

1. By their Contention.

2. By their Conquest.

1. By their Contention: There is a twofold contention.

1. Of man with man.

2. Of man with God.

This latter is exprest in Scripture, by gainsaying, Rom. 10. by resisting Acts 7. 51. *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, ye do alwayes resist the Holy Ghost by kicking,* Deut. 32. 15. This kicking implies;

1. Opposition against God,

2. Opposition joyned with scorn and contempt, putting a slight upon God, and all his Counsels and ways. Now this latter is the contention meant in the Text, contention against God; they will not hearken to his voice, nor be obedient to his truth: The Lord commands and calls them to accept of his grace, and to be obedient to his Law, but they rejected God, kick against his Word, and refuse to hearken to him.

2. By this conquest or victory in this contest after all the strivings of God with them, they still stand out and overcome; *they obey not the truth*, but persist to obey unrighteousness: where,

1. By the Truth we are to understand the whole Word of God, John 17. 17. *Thy Word is Truth*; both the word of righteousness, the Law, and the Word of faith, the Gospel: by obeying the truth, we are to understand; submitting to the government of the Law.

Law, and accepting the grace of the Gospel:

2 By unrighteousness we are to understand, all those corrupt Principles, according to which the Lusts of men do govern them; which (I take) the Apostle means, Rom. 7. 23, by the *Law of Sin*. In that, and the former Verse, there is mention made of *Four Laws* contending one against another, whereof *Two* are on one side and *Two* on the other, *The Law of God*; the *Law of the Mind*, the *Law of the Members*, and the *Law of Sin*. By the *Law of God*, is understood, the *Word of God*: by the *Law of the Mind*, is understood, in the Regenerate, *Grace*, in the Unregenerate, the *Light of the Natural Conscience*: by the *Law of the Members*, understand, *Lust*, or *Concupiscence*: by the *Law of Sin*, those corrupt *Principles*, according to which Lust governs: As the *Law of the Mind* governs according to those Holy Principles contained in the *Word*, so there are certain Principles of Unrighteousness, according to which the *Flesh* governs.

To enumerate and reckon up all these corrupt Principles, would be as great a task, as to reckon up all the Doctrines of Truth, and the Righteous Commands of God; to each of which Holy Doctrines and Commands, there are in this *Law of Sin*, Principles directly contrary. Now because it may serve the design I am now pursuing, viz. To help sinners to understand themselves, I shall mention some of the chief of them, in number *Ten*; which, if you will, you may call, *The Devils Ten Commandments*.

1 *Live to thy self*: Mind thine own things: This is the first and great Commandment, on which all the rest hang, and to which they serve, and is

the same is, be thine own God, thine own Idol.

2. *Let thy Will be thy Law.* Thou art thine own, thy Tongue is thine own, thy Time is thine own, thy Estate is thine own, mayest thou not do what thou wilt with thine own?

3. *Make thy best of the time present, and of present things.* Lose not a certainty for uncertainties; who knows what shall be hereafter? Eat and drink, for to-morrow thou diest; be merry while thou mayest, spend whilst thou hast it; make Hay while the Sun shines; Death comes, and there is an end of all thy mirth.

4. *Stand fast in the liberties of thy Flesh.* Come not into bondage; be not a voluntary slave to a strict and restrained life, when thou mayest, if thou wilt, use thine own liberty.

5. *Continue in sin, because Grace hath abounded.* Christ died for sinners, God is merciful, why shouldst thou then fear to take thy course?

6. *Do as others do.* Go along with the multitude, fashion thy self to the time; be not singular: Why shouldst thou think thy self wiser than others?

7. *Do no more in Religion than needs.* Be not Righteous over-much; be not over-forward; a little Faith, a little Repentance will serve thy turn.

8. *Do not trouble thy self about small offences.* Thoughts are free; Words are but things of course: What man man is there that lives and sins not? What shouldst thou keep such a do about thy sins? Are they not but little ones?

9. *Be not over-baſty.* If thou must repent, it is time enough yet: torment not thy self before thy time: repentance will be well enough at last: when thou art old, thou wilt have little else to do: be not old, whilst thou art young.

10. *Truſt*

10. *Trust God with thy soul, rather then man with thy body.* That is, choole Iniquity rather then Affliction; venture no farther in matters of Religion, then thou mayest with safety.

These are some of those corrupt principles which make up the Law of Sin, to which all others may be reduced; and living under the power of any of these or any others of the like nature, this is *obeying Unrighteousness*. As the Apostle says, *He that breaks one of the Commandments of God, is guilty of all*: So he that lives under the power of any one of the Commandments of the Devil, is, if not under the power of all, yet as sure a slave to the Devil as if he were guilty of all; he whose foot is entangled in one cord of the Net, is as fast, as he that hath the whole Net spread over him: if a bird be held by a leg or a wing, it is as sure as if the whole body were in the Net. Here now you may have also the description of the Goats; those are contentious, resisting the Lord and the word of his grace; and who, after all the strivings of the Lord with them, do overcome, and hold their own, and persist in their disobeying the truth, and obeying unrighteousness, or living under the dominion of those corrupt Principles, which make up the *Law of Sin*.

Let me here demand of you these three things:

First, *Are not these Principles I have mentioned every one of them evidently principles of unrighteousness? And may they not as well be called the Devils Commandments, as the Devil be called a Devil?*

Secondly, *Are not all those that live under the power of these Principles, the very men here meant in the Text, by those that obey Unrighteousness, may they not as well be called the Devils Servants, as those*

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wicked Laws, the Devils Commandments.

Thirdly, Are not all persons that are not precisely godly, in the sense I have before described it, evidently held under some of these corrupt Principles? Is not this it which you in reproach charge upon the Saints, that they will not live under these, or some of these Rules? That they will not take their liberty, that they will not do as others, but they must be singular, forsooth, as if they were wiser than their neighbours; that they stand upon every trifle and small matter, &c.

Some of these Anti-Precisians, if they be laid to these black lines, do touch with them in every point throughout; you may well stile them *Hells thorough Conformists*, or the Devils best Subjects.

Sinners, the whole generation of you that are of such a Spirit, even every one of you that have a word to speak against the preciseness of godliness and godly men, come and look into this glass which is here set before you. Do you know your own faces when you see them? Are not these Principles the very Pictures and express Images of you? If you say they are not, it is because you do not know your own faces; if they are not, let me be rejected for a *Liar* and a *Slanderer*. But if you be, even all of you, these very men, then look a little further, and you may see your reward will be in the Judgement: Why, what is it? Read on and you have it; To them that obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil.

If you say, This is but your opinion, but for all that you may be mistaken, we hope so far as well as you, the best of you, for all your great words:

words: but our opinion. Why, is it never your opinion too? Do you never doubt? Are you never afraid that this may be, that this will be your portion? Did your own consciences never preach to you the same things? but whether they did or no, this is as true, that indignation and wrath will be the portion of every soul of you thus living and thus dying; this is as true, as that God is righteous. The Righteousness of God is engaged, to render to every man according to his works; and so to them that obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, &c.

And by this time you may see that there is some difference betwixt the rewards of the godly, and the rewards of all others in the world; as much difference as betwixt Life and Death, Mercy and Wrath, everlasting Joy and Peace, and everlasting Anguish and Tribulation. If Heaven and Hell differ onely in conceits, and if there be not as great difference betwixt the rewards of these and all others, as betwixt Heaven and Hell, then once more I tell you, we will be content to be the *Pharisees*. And have you not yet done with talking of our sanctities and conceits? Is it but a conceit, that there shall be a judgement? Or is this a conceit, that it shall then fare better with the Sheep than with the Goats? Or that those are Christs Sheep that hear his voice, and follow his steps, and keep by the Shepherds Tena? Is this a conceit, that it shall fare better with the Friends of Christ, than with his Enemies; or that those are the friends of Christ, who are the friends of Holiness? Is this a conceit, that it shall fare better with the servants of Christ than with strangers? Or, are those the best servants, who waste their Talents, or

L. 3

blind

bind them up in a Napkin? Will Christ say in that day, *Away thou faithfull Servant; away from me ye workers of Righteousnes?* You have loved me too much, you have pleased me too well, you have followed me too close, you have given your selves to too much praying, too much praising, too much fasting; you have been too conscientious, too tender, too watchful, too holy; you would not be merry, and idle, and vain; you would not go along with your Neighbours, to their sporting, to their Ravellings, to their Pleasures, but must needs deny your selves, and take up your Cross and follow me; you could not be content with an Earthly happiness, but you must have Glory and Honour, and Immortality; you could not be content to venture on a groundless hope of Glory, but you must needs make sure of it, by patient continuance in well-doing. *Away from me ye workers of Righteousnes;* you that have followed me in the Regeneration, get you gone, get you down to everlasting destruction. Will this be the voice of the Judge at that day? Will he call to sinners, *Come ye wantons, come ye Wine-bibbers, come ye Swearers, Lyars, Scissers, Whore-masters, come ye blessed Crew, inherit the Kingdom?* All this must be so, if godliness be but a fancy; and do you not yet see Sinners, what men of Reason, what men of Judgement you are, and how much truth or weight there is in your charge against the Saints? Oh Christians, you see I hope sufficiently, how little ground you have to take the least notice of, or discouragement from these confident Adversaries, who in proclaiming you Phanaticks, must proclaim themselves either *Infidels* or *Idols*: Thus I have shewed, that the principles of Godliness are not *Phanaticall*.

The Duties and Counters of Godliness are
no fancies: I shall instance in such duties, and those
parts of duties, which are most obnoxious to their
censure; the most spiritual duties; the most spiritual
parts of duties, which being most out of sight, and
above the reach of the carnal world, are most of all
thus censured by them; I shall mention only two,
which indeed are comprehensive of all.

1. Worshipping God in the Spirit.

2. Walking in the Spirit.

1. Worshipping God in the Spirit. If this be
a fancy, the Apostle Paul with the Christians his
Contemporaries, were the great Phanaticks of their
time; who saies thus of himself and them, *Phil.*
3. 3. We are the Circumcision, who worship God in
the spirit. We are the Circumcision; that is, We are
the People of God; we are they who are circumci-
sed with the Circumcision which is without
hands, circumcised in heart, which is all one, as
if he had said, we are Christians, who worship God
in the spirit. Worshipping God in the spirit,
notes,

1. The worship of the soul, or heart-worship.

2. The worshipping God through his Spirit, or
in the Holy Ghost.

1. The worship of the soul, or inward worship,
and that, 1. As it stands in opposition to meere
bodily worship: I say not as it is oppos'd to bodily
worship, but to meere bodily worship. 2. As it stands
in opposition to the Antiquated Jewish worship,
which was more external, pompous, and ceremo-
nious. *We worship God in the spirit, that is, we wor-*
ship God in the heart, and in the simplicity and
plainness of Gospel-worship.

Heart-worship is the true worship; the worship
of the soul, is the soul of worship: The body while
out the soul is dead, and bodily worship without
spiritual, is dead worship, John 4. 24. *God is a
Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him
in Spirit and in Truth.* The latter word (*Truth*) is
exegitical of the former (*Spirit*) signifying, that
worshipping in Spirit, is worshipping in Truth;
This is the true worship, worship indeed. The worship
of the body, the uncovering of the head, the bow-
ing the knee, the lifting up of the hands, or voice,
these are but the outside and carcase of worship,
and so far only capable of being accounted worship,
as they are helpful to, and expressive of the devo-
tions of the soul. As bowing of the knee signifies
the bowing of the heart; as the uncovering of the
head either expresses, or helps toward the in-
ward reverence of the soul, so far as they worship,
and no farther, and even then but improperly so
called. But as they stand single and separated
from the inward worship, they are no worship, no
more then a carcase is a man; but are meer sha-
dows and fancies. There is no such phanatick as
the Formalist, who whilst with those Heathens,
Mat. 6. 7. *He thinks to be heard for his much speak-
ing,* doth but play the hypocrite and Lyar: Look
what the Courtiers Complements are, such are the
Formalists devotions, smooth words, tongue-cour-
tesies, flattering salutes, fawning cringes, *Your ser-
vant Sir, your servant, command me what you please,
I am ready to serve you.* Here is a great shew of re-
spect and kindness, but what is there in it? What
wise man will regard it? And what more is there
in the Formalists devotions? What is it but meer
complementing with the Holy God? Very id-
your,

your and lowly, and all appearance, and a great
house is there, that rich Devotion makes, but what
is there in it? What awe, and Soul-reverence of
God, what heart-striving and wrestling with God,
what heart-elevation, or lifting up the Soul to
God is there in all this? Is there no such thing as
heart-striving and Soul-reverence required in the
Worship of God; or are these but shadows of wor-
ship, and is the soul of it onely in the Lips or Knees?
Doth he whose Soul is poured out in prayer, whose
Spirit strives with the Lord, doth he but pray in
conceit, worship God in conceit, and those whose
Eyes and Tongues, and Hands onely pray, have
they gotten the substance, are these the true
Worshippers? Beloved, be not deceived, God
sees not as man sees; he sees what is within man;
he sees what is within our duties; they are not
shews or sounds that can blinde his Eye, or please
his Ear.

Ephes. 5. 19. *Be ye filled with the Spirit, speaking
to your selves in Psalms and Hymns, and Spiritual
Songs, singing and making Melody in your hearts to
the Lord. Believe it Christians, Heart musick is the
best Church musick. Heartpraying, and Heart-
singing, makes the best Melody in the Eares of the
Lord of Sabbath. My work and intent is not to
decry all external worship, as useless or unaccepta-
ble, We must glorifie God in our bodies, as well as in
our spirits; Our Lips must bear their parts in our
praises and practises; but I would not that you
should take the body of worship to be the Soul, and
the Soul to be nothing. Be not conceited that the
outward part is the worship, and the inward but
a conceit. Brethren, the living God will have li-
ving service; the God of our spirits, will have
the*

the service of our spirit; the worshipping God in spirit, this is the true worship; God will not be, and take heed you be not cheated with them. When all the men of the world, with their wits, parts, and intellects, have commended, garnished, and magnified, the carcass of Religion, and decryed, and disgraced its soul and life, yet this shall still stand, as an irrefragable Truth; They are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

2. Worshipping God through the spirit, through the help and assistance of the Spirit of God; as to instance in prayer, Jude 20. *Praying in the Holy Ghost.* Rom. 8. 26. *The Spirit it self helpeth our infirmities.* The Spirit of God affords a three-fold help in prayer.

1. He indites our requests; suggests matter of Prayer to us, who as the Apostle there tells us, *Know not what we should pray for as we ought.* Carnal men lusts do often make their Prayers, and then no wonder they ask amiss; when they should be seeking the death of their lust, they ask meat for their lusts; we often, not knowing what we ought to ask, do ask we know not what; we ask a stone, a serpent, a scorpion; sometimes, when we think we ask bread: If God should alwaies give his people their prayers, these prayers would undo them. When we are poor, we ask riches, and it may be, if God should give us them, our riches might undo us: Sometimes we ask ease, or credit, or liberty, and if we had what we ask, it might be our ruine; the Spirit of God knows what's fit for us, and accordingly guides our prayers; He helps us to undo our sins, and so teaches us what confessions to make; carnal men will confess sins, but any sins rather

1. He enlighteneth their own eyes. He helps us to understand our wants, and so teaches us what to ask; He helps us to understand our mercies, and so teaches us what to give thanks for; carnal men often come before the Lord with mock praises, give thanks for their election, justification, sanctification, hope of glory, when it may be, the power of sin, and the wrath of God abides upon them, and they remain without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the world; the Spirit of God, if they had him, would make their devotions more reasonable and regular.

2. He excites, and quickens, and enlarges their hearts in prayer. The Spirit of God comes in and influences upon the heart, and draws forth the soul; and this is the import of the following words, *The Spirit it self maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered*; that is, he sets up a groaning and sighing after the Lord. Groaning notes the strength and ardency of desire, which through the fervency of it, puts the Soul to pain, and an holy impatience till it be heard; in which sense its used, verse 21. *For we our selves, who have received the first fruits of the spirit, groan within our selves, waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of our body.* It works such groanings as cannot be uttered; it sometimes makes the hearts of Christians too big for their mouths, their desires more larger than their expressions; as much warmth, and life, and strength of affection as there does appear without, there's more within: Oh, how flat and dead are our hearts oftentimes; how much are we straitned in our prayers, we stand as men struck dumb when we come before the Lord; or if there be words in our mouths, there is scarce any word in our hearts;
some-

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Sometimes we cannot speak, and if we can speak, we cannot groan; the Spirit doth either put words in our mouths, or else supply the want of words, by kindling and enlarging inward desires, helping us to groan out a prayer when we cannot speak it out; and silent groans will sound in the ears of the Lord, when the loudest cries may not be heard.

3. He encourages and emboldens the heart in prayer, enables us to call God *Father*, to pray to him, to cry to him, to be confident of audience and acceptance with him upon this ground, *Gal. 4. 6. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father.* And hereby he furnisheth us with a mighty Argument to plead with God: *Father hear me, Father forgive me, Father pity me, Father help me: Am not I thy childe, thy Son, or thy Daughter? To whom may a childe be bold to go? With whom may a child have hope to speed, if not with his Father? Father hear me: The Fathers of our Flesh are full of bowels and full of pity to their Children, and know how to give good things to them when we ask them; when they ask Bread, will they deny them? when they ask cloaths, or any thing they want, will they deny them? And is not the Father of Spirits more full of bowels, more full of bounty, than the Fathers of our Flesh, Father hear me*

This is praying in the Spirit, and if this be a fancy with you, I must tell you sinners, that it is such a fancy, as experienced Christians that have most proved it, would not lose for all your substance. But will you stand to it? Is this Fanatical praying indeed? then bring your *Index expurgatorius*, and expunge these Texts out of the Scriptures, or else, if you let them stand, and look over them again, you

you will next say, *Their Bible is as Fanatical as*
themselves.

But let me add one word to convince you from
your own judgement (if you understand what
you doe) that praying in the Spirit is no fancy;
and this, by putting this one Question to you,
Dare any of you all, when you go to God in Pray-
er, deliberately refuse to begge the assistance of his
Spirit? Whether you use a Form, or Pray without
a Form, that is not so material: The assistance of
the Spirit is needed as well of those that use a Form,
as of those that pray without it: Nor dare you, I
say, when you go to pray deliberately, refuse to beg
the assistance of the Spirit? Dare you say, *Lord, I*
need not, nor desire any such assistance; I will not ask
it of thee, that thy Spirit may be given into me, to help
my infirmities? If you beg the assistance of the Spi-
rit, you hope to have it, and if you have it, there is
that praying in the Spirit, which you cry down for
a fancy: Judge now, whether you do not condemn
the things which your selves allow, and in your
Judgement and Practice justify the reality of that
Duty, which with your mouths you decree for Fana-
tical; *Will you also be his Disciples? Will you also be*
Fanatics?

2 Walking in the Spirit, this is no fancy, *Gal. 5. 25.*
If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. In
the prosecution of this I shall shew,

1. What is meant by the Spirit.
2. What by walking in the Spirit.
3. That it is no fancy.
1. What is meant by the Spirit here: That, be-
ing something that is opposed to the Flesh, or cor-
ruption, as appears, *verse 16, 17.* must of necessity
be one of these two things, possibly both, either the
Holy

Holy Spirit, and the influence, assistance, and operations of that holy Spirit, or else that New Nature which is begotten in us by the Spirit; the Grace of the Spirit infused into our hearts, and abiding in us; which of the two we understand it of, the difference will not be considerable.

2. What is meant by *walking in the spirit* : Some there are, that by Spirit understand the Doctrine of Christianity; and accordingly, would have this walking in the Spirit, to be nothing else, but the embracing the Christian Religion. But if this be so, then what is to be understood by flesh, which *verse 17* is said to be contrary to this Spirit? Why, by flesh they will tell us, we are to understand Judaism: but then let me ask;

1. What is meant by the lusting of this flesh: which was now dead, against the Spirit? Is that the meaning of it, *Judaism* lusteth against *Christianity*?

2. How can this dead flesh have such a numerous off-spring, as is mentioned, *verse 10*. The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatries, Witchcraft, Hatred, Vengeance, &c.*

Must all these brats be laid at the door of the Synagogue? are these the brood of that Ceremonious Law of Carnal Commandments, or are they not manifestly the fruits of that corrupt Law of Carnal Concupiscence? I know not with what shadow of reason we can understand by the flesh, any thing else but Lust or Concupiscence; and then by the Spirit we must understand grace, or the Spirit of Grace, which bid defiance, and are contrary to it.

Let us consider further, What is meant by that expression, of being *led by the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 14. Why, possibly the same men will tell us; there is no more in this then in the former; it importeth no more than the Spirits *leading us into all Truth*, the truth of the Gospel, as the Star led the Wise men of the East to the *Messiah*: If this be granted to be all, yet here we have gotten something, *viz.* That the Spirit of God is acknowledged to be our leader: but let us consider one Scripture more, *Ezek. 36. 27.* *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes.* What are those Statutes of God, but the whole Will and Word of God? One or two of them I shall mention, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and Follow me: Walk out your salvation with fear and trembling: Quench not the Spirit: Abstain from all appearance of evil: See that you walk circumspectly, &c.* Are not these, and many more such, found and unrepel'd in this great Statute Book? What is it to walk in these Statutes, other then to live in the sincere obedience of the whole Will of God? Now, saies the Lord, *I will give my Spirit, and he shall cause them, or help them to walk in my Statutes, to live an holy life.* Let these things be considered, and see if they will not help us to a better interpretation of those words, *Walk in the Spirit*: Why what is the meaning then of them? I shall give you the Judgment of one who was no Phanatick; *Cornelius A Lapide*, who in his *Commentary* on ver. 16. of this Chapter, interprets the same words thus, *Walk in the Spirit; that is, Vitam, actiones & mores instituite secundum dictamen, instinctum, impulsum spiritus, ac gratie immisse & indite vobis a spiritu sancto, qui suadet & monet ut spiritualiter vivamus.*

To walk in the Spirit, signifies,

1. To live under the conduct of the Spirit.

2. To live in the power of the Spirit.

3. To live a Spiritual life.

1. To live under the conduct and guidance of the Spirit, Rom. 8:14. *As many as are (led) by the Spirit, are the Sons of God:* There is a double Guide, whereby the Lord leads His people; The Guide of His Word, Psalm 73: 24. *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel:* And the guide of His Spirit, John 16: 13. *He shall lead you into all truth.* There are two things which the Spirit doth in leading on His People.

First, He enlightens their Eyes, opens their Understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures, which point out to us our way, Luke 24: 45. *Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures.*

Secondly, He takes them by the hand, as it were, and leads them, Isa. 40: 11. *He shall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his Bosome, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

2. To live in the power of the Spirit, or of that inherent and abiding Grace which we receive from him, to be carried on in an holy course, and all the Duties of it, both from the *intrinsic* power of the Life of God begotten in us, and by the *concurrent* Influences and assistance of the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given us, to help our infirmities. As in the Duty of Prayer, Rom. 8: 26. So in all other Christian Duties, John 15: 5. *Without me (sayes Christ, that is, without the assistance of my Spirit) ye can do nothing.* Therefore the Psalmist resolves, Psalm 71: 16. *I will go in the strength of the Lord, and by thee I will make mention of thy Name.*

Name. And this living in the power of the Spirit, is no other then is signified (if we did understand what we say) in those common expressions which we ordinarily have in our mouths, *By the grace of God, or, by the help of God, I will do this, or that.* What the Apostle speaks of himself, as Minister, is applicable to Christians, *1 Cor. 15. 10. I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.*

Thus to walk in the Spirit, is to follow those directions, and intimations of the Will of God, which he gives us out of the Word; and those impulses of the Spirit upon our hearts, whereby, as by a gale of Wind filling our Sails, he moves and helps us on. When you find any clear light, breaking in from the Word upon your Consciences, and thereupon some stirrings upon your hearts, either by the way of check, restraining, and calling you back from any irregular or disorderly walking, or quickening and encouraging you on in a way of duty, this you may safely take to be from the Spirit; and when you entertain this light, obey these checks, and follow these holy impulses; this is your walking in the Spirit.

3. To live a Spiritual Life. In whom the Spirit hath begotten another heart, those he leads on in another life. He that is born of the Spirit is a spiritual man, and those that are led by the Spirit, walk on in a spiritual course, that is, they live a more noble and raised life then the rest of the world's Carnal men, who are governed and ruled by that evil spirit that is in the world, live an evil and carnal life, worldly spiritual men a worldly life; sensual men a sensual life; *Ephes. 2. 2, 3. Wherein*

in time past ye walked after the course of this World, according to the Prince of the power of the Air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of Disobedience, among whom we also had our conversations in the lusts of the flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Whilst we were in the common state we took the common road; whilst we were in the flesh, fleshly men, we lived a fleshly life. To serve our bellies, to serve our appetites, to serve our pride, and covetousness, and other lusts, this was our life. And this life was futable to that Spirit which was within them, and that evil Spirit, the Prince of this world without them, that govern'd and steer'd their course. Accordingly, the Saints having a new heart within, and a new leader without, do lead a new life; as the flesh and the Devil carry evil men on in a course futable to their leaders, so the Spirit and Grace of God carry on the Saints in a course futable to theirs, an holy, spiritual, and heavenly life. So that this is to walk in the Spirit, to live holily and spiritually; this is that life which is called, *The life of God*, Ephes. 4.19. *The Conversation in Heaven*, Phil. 3. 20. *Our Conversation is in Heaven*. And a Spiritual and Heavenly Life, this may be called, upon a three-fold account.

- 1 Their dealings are about Spiritual and Heavenly things.
- 2 Their delights are Spiritual and Heavenly.
- 3 By these Spiritual dealings and delights themselves become daily more Spiritual.
- 1 Their dealings are about Spiritual and Heavenly things, God, and Heaven, and everlasting Glory; and those spiritual Exercises, whereby God

is served, and Glory obtained: these are the matters about which this life is spent. They live with God, they hold daily intelligence with Heaven, they are much in the contemplating, and admiring, and adoring the infinite beauty and incomprehensible perfections of God and his unspeakable love and grace, and goodness towards them. They are searching into the Mysteries of Christ, studying out the riches of the glory of the Mystery of the Gospel. They live amongst Angels, their hearts and their eyes are dayly in that general Assembly and Church of the first-born. When they sleep they lay them down under the wings of their Lord; no sooner are they awake, but they get them up to the top of *Pisgab*, to take a view of the Promised Land; *When I awake, I am ever with thee*, says the *Psalmist*: When the covetous man awakes, he is with his God; when the Epicure awakes, he is with his God; when the Adulterer awakes, he is with his Goddess: Christians are presently above the clouds, above the stars, falling down before the Throne of the Almighty: Their work is to seek, and serve, and praise, and please the Lord; to carry themselves so, that they may be accepted to God; to be washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb; to be minding their souls, consciences, affections, thoughts, that these may all, in their several capacities, exalt and enjoy the Lord: Their Trading is for the *Pearl*, whilst the *Merchants* of the *Earth* are trading for *Gold*, and *Silver*, and *Spices*, whilst the *Muck-worms* of the world are dealing in *Corn*, and *Sheep*, and *Oxen*, and *Asses*, whilst the voluptuous wantons of the earth are dealing about fashions, and feasts, and sports, trading in *Toyes*, *Feathers*, *Apes*, and *Peacocks*; Christians

are trading in Promises and Prayer, in Faith and Repentance, in Patience and Humility, in Mercy and Charity, that by these they may make their Calling and Election sure, and so an entrance may be administered unto them abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These are the businesses of Christians lives, their dealings are about spiritual things.

2 Their delights are in spiritual things: The Lord is the delight of their hearts, *Delight thy self in God*, sayes the Psalmist, *Psal. 37. 4.* And what he bids others do, he does himself, *Psal. 16. 8, 9.* *I have set the Lord always before me, therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth.* The thoughts of God are dear and precious to them. The Word and Law of God is their delight, *Psal. 1.* *His delight is in the Law of his God;* The Courts of the Lord, his Ordinances, Worship, Sabbaths, are their delight, *Psal. 84. 1.* *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts.* Their work is their delight, *Psal. 40.* *I delight to do thy will;* Their hardest works, Fasting, and Watching, and Wrestling, and Fighting against Sin and Temptations, crucifying, and mortifying their own flesh, denying themselves, mourning for sin; there is much sweetness they find in their very travels, and tears, and sorrowings; as sorrowing, sayes the Apostle, yet *alwayes rejoicing.* As Solomon speaks of Carnal Mirth, *Prov. 14.* *In the midst of laughter the heart is sad:* so it may be said of spiritual Mourning, in the midst of sorrow, the heart is joyful; the heart of a Saint is never in so sweet a frame, as when it is melted into godly sorrow; but especially, Christ is their delight, he is the *delicia Christiani orbis*, *Canticles 2. 3.* *I sat down under his*

shadow, with great delight. Carnal men are ready to say to them, as the Daughters of Jerusalem to the Spouse, Cant. 5. 9. *What is thy beloved more than another beloved? What beauty is there in him, that thou shouldst thus desire him, or take such pleasure in him? They see no beauty in him, he hath no Form, nor comeliness in their eye, and therefore they think there is none.* Oh Sinners! you do not know Christ, you have had no acquaintance with him, you have not tasted of the fruits of this Tree, of the clusters of this Vine: *I sat me down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my (taste.)* Saints have tasted of the sweetnest of Christ; tasted that the Lord is gracious, and therefore can take great delight in him. The delight they take in Christ, is that which puts such a delight into every Ordinance, into every Duty; therefore Praying, and Reading is so pleasant to them, because there they meet with their Beloved. Christ appears to them in his Word, Christ meets his Saints in their Prayings and Fasting, and this makes all sweet to their souls. Carnal men think the life of Saints to be an heavy, a sad, and most troublesome life; they count, that themselves have the onely merry and pleasant lives: that their Hawks, and Hounds, their Carding and Dicing, and Drinking and Dancing, their Stews and Plays, that these are the onely Heaven: This is all one as to say, that God hath put more sweetnest into creatures, then in himself; that the basest and vilest use of the creatures, doth yield more true content, then the souls exercising it self on God; as if the thorn should yield more sweetnest, the bramble more fatnest then the Fig-tree or Olive; where are the

understandings of these men? I tell you Sinners, when you have gone from flower to flower, from creature to creature, from pleasure to pleasure, and sucked out all the fatness and sweetness that these will yield; a poor Christian will get more real pleasure out of one Chapter of his Bible, out of an honest Sermon, out of one hour converse with God in Prayer, then your whole life will bring you in. The Gospel, with its breasts of consolation, at which he sucks, yields him sweeter milk; those clusters of Canaan, on which he lives, yield him richer Wine then the whole world will afford any; The gleanings of a Christians joy, are better then the Vintage of Sinner; and you cannot so much slight the glory of their Sun, as they despise the glory of your spark.

3 By these spiritual exercises and delights, they become more and more spiritual themselves. By their beholding the face of God, they are changed from glory to glory, into his image and likeness; by living so much in Heaven, the temper and frame of their hearts becomes heavenly; mens ordinary company and exercises have such an influence upon them, that 'tis not unusual that they change their disposition. Frothy company, and vain exercises, will leave a frothiness and vanity upon mens spirits, and serious, and savoury company, and exercises, do leave a good savour behind them. He whose work is in the Coal-mines, his hiew is thereafter, the flies that feed on the dung, look like the dung they feed on. Carnal men, by being continually conversant about their earthly affairs, have nothing but earthiness left upon their spirits; their Thoughts, Affections, their Souls are become earth, earthly; their duties are earthly, their

their prayers, their praises, their hearings, all are earthly: When they go to Church, when they go to their Closets, they must carry their earth along with them, or leave their hearts behind them. On the other side, Christians, leaving their dwellings with God, their Delights, their Recreations, their daily business with God; the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon them; by their *Divine Exercises*, they are made more partakers of the *Divine Nature*; and as Worldlings businesses and delights, do leave an earthliness upon their very Religion, so a Christians Religion doth Spiritualize his Civil Affairs: Carnal mens prayers do favour of their Fields, Oxen, and sports; Carnal mens Sabbaths do smell of their Working-days, and a Christians works do favour of his prayers; a Christians Week-days have a tincture of his Sabbaths; he eats and drinks, he buys and sells, he ploughs and threshes, not as a man, but as a Saint; he doth not onely pray as a Saint, and hear as a Saint, but he ploughs as a Saint, he trades as a Saint; his heart is in Heaven while his hand is at the Plough, he is serving his God while he is serving his own necessities; he seeks, he serves, he eyes, he enjoys his God, in all he hath or doth; he proves by his sense that *God is every where*; with him he dwells, feeds, labours, lodges, with him he lives, he dies.

And thus you see what it is to walk in the Spirit. Look how far forth such a Christian lives in the Spirit, so far forth doth he live such a life as this.

3 This is no fanstie, and if I fail not here, if I prove this, I hope Sinners, you will then see reason enough to take the Phanaetick upon your selves, and

from henceforth like these despised Saints in your
Sabbath now, Israelites indeed.

Christians (you that hear me this day) will you
 help me in this proof, this once help me, and the
 cause will go clearly on the Lords side; you may
 if you will, come in, and be willing instances of
 this Truth. Will you live according to your Prin-
 ciples, that Life of God which is within you? Will
 you live according to your Rules, that Word of
 Life which is before you? Will you follow your
 Leader, that Holy Spirit which is given to con-
 duct you? Will you fall closer to the practice of
 that Godliness which you profess? will you live in
 the obedience of that Spirit which you have re-
 ceived, will you shew your selves a pattern of Faith,
 of Patience, of Righteousness and Holiness? Will
 you be dealing less about these earthly vanities, and
 be less earthly in your earthly dealings; shall your
 dealings be wholly about Heaven and Heavenly
 things, and will you make these your dealings your
 delights? Will you labour by being more conver-
 sant about spirituall things, and in spiritual exer-
 cises, to become more spiritual, more spiritually
 minded, more spiritually tempred? Will you get
 more clear off the love, and lusts, and fashions, and
 ways, and joys of this world? Will you suffer the
 Eternal Spirit to fill you with his love, and fashion
 you into his likeness? Will you forbear any
 more resisting, grieving, slighting, quenching
 his holy motions; will you hearken to his coun-
 sels, answer his impulses? Will you grow on to be
 more Christians daily, more Saints daily, Saints in
 heart, Saints in tongue, Saints in the general frame
 of your course? Will you make your graces more vi-
 sible, your comforts more visible, your spiritual joys
 and

and delights more visible: will you let your light shine before men, that they may either put out their own Eyes, or else be forced to acknowledge that God is in you of a truth?

Brethren, We may much thank our selves for all our Adversaries slanders; we have helped them to reproaches, we have furnished them with accusations, by our walking so much in the Flesh, and so little in the Spirit, we have taught them to question, whether there be any such thing as walking in the Spirit. The Lord pardon us, the Lord make us sensible of it; we have brought up an *evil report* upon our God, upon his Spirit, Gospel and wayes, and for ought we know have undone *many poor wretches*, by our hardning them in their misconceits of Godliness and Religion: There have been so much Dross in our Gold, so much Ashes upon our Fire, so much Earth upon our Spirits, such sad mixture of Water with our Wine, so much Liberty taken for our Carnal joyes and Carnal pleasures; our Light hath been so dim, our Grace hath been so low, our good works have been so spare, and so thin, that we have made them bold to say, We are not what we are, but a meer lie and deceit: And we have now no such way to vindicate our selves, our Religion, our Holy profession, to justifie our God and his Gospel, as by blowing up the Coals, shaking off our Ashes, stirring up the Graces of God within us, and letting them have their perfect work in us. Will you Christians, will you hearken to me in this? Then I should be bold to bring you forth as Witnesses for God and his Truth. However, though upon your account it would be the more comfortable, though *ex abundanti*, I would bring in as many evidences as possible,

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yet if you should fail me, or any other particular congregation of professors, yet let the World know I have sufficient proof ready at hand. For,

If this walking in the Spirit be a fancy, then these Damnable Absurdities will unavoidably follow:

1. That the Spirit of the Lord is unfaithful in his Office.
2. That God himself is false in his Promise.
3. That the Devil doth more to the Damning of Souls, than the Spirit of God to the saving them.
4. That God hath no People, no peculiar People in the world.

1. If walking in the Spirit be a fancy, *the Spirit is unfaithful in his Office*. That the Spirit of God is given to the People of God, to every one of them, is so plainly asserted, that he must deny the Scriptures that doth not grant it, Rom. 8. 9. *Ye are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you.* Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. That there are certain operations of the Spirit, which he is by Office to perform, is as certain, as, 1. *To Enlighten*; therefore he is called the Spirit of *Wisdom and Revelation*, Ephes. 1. 17, 18. 2. *To Sanctifie*; therefore Sanctification is called, *The sanctification of the Spirit*, 2 Thes. 2. 13, 3. *To Lead*, John 16. 13. *He shall lead you into all Truth.* 4. *To Assist*, and help, Rom. 8. 26. *Exek. 36. 27.* 5. *To Comfort*; therefore is he called, *The Comforter*. If the Spirit of the Lord doth his Office, then there are persons that are *Enlightened, Sanctified, Led, Assisted, Comforted* by him; If there be none

none such; if the comfort of the Saints be but pretended, if their light, their help, their quicknings, their encouragements, be all fancies; if they be but led in conceit, quickned in conceit, comforted in conceit, then where is the Spirit's faithfulness? See what Blasphemies men run themselves upon before they are aware. Sinners, take heed what you do; you are bold to reproach the Saints with *the Spirit*, *the Spirit*; but take heed meanwhile of reproaching the Spirit with *unfaithfulness*: Blasphemy against the Spirit is no small sin, though every blaspheming of the Spirit, be not that *unpardonable sin*, yet it is a fair step towards it; look to your selves.

2. If walking in the Spirit be a fancy, then God himself is false in his promise, *Ezek. 36. 27.* before-mentioned, *I will put my Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in my Statutes.* If there be no such thing done, then where is the promise of God? He that makes walking in the Spirit, to be nothing but talks, makes the promise of God to be nothing but words.

3. If walking in the Spirit be but fancy, Then the Devil doth more to the destroying of Souls, than the Spirit of the Lord doth to the salvation of Souls. Let us consider again that Scripture, *Ephes. 2. 2.* *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this World, according to the Prince of the power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience.* There are two things there observable to our purpose; 1. Sinners are led by the Devil. 2. They are assisted and excited by the Devil. 1. They are led by the Devil; that's noted in that expression, *They walk on according to the Prince of the Power of the Air*; according to his

guidance, according to his minde and will, he hath
them at his beck. When he sayes, Go, they go, and
when he sayes, Come, they come; and when he sayes
do this, they do it. But how comes this to pass,
that the Devil can hold such an hand over them,
can lead them thus at pleasure? VVhy; 2. They are
assisted and excited by the Devil; that evil Spirit
works in them, suggests evil thoughts into them,
and thereby excites and provokes, and sets them
a work. The Devil is said, *Acts 5. to fill the hearts*
of Ananias and Saphira, to lye against the Holy
Ghost. And when he had once put a lye into their
Hearts, their Hearts presently put a lye into their
Mouths. VVhen the Devil hath wrought wicked-
ness into the hearts of sinners, then they presently
fall to working it out. When wicked men lye, it
is the Devil lies in them; when they curse and
rage, and swell with madness, the Devil rages in
them. VVhen the lusts of men bring forth Adul-
teries, Drunkenness, Riot, Revellings, &c. the Devil
lies within blowing up the coals. Is this but a con-
ceit, that wicked men *walk in the Spirit*? That un-
clean Spirit. That the Devil drawes them on, and
drives them on, and helps them on, and hardens
them on in their wickedness? Could men be so
wicked as they are, could there be such quarrel-
ling, and contentions, such debaucheries and vil-
lanies, such cursings and blasphemings, such rot-
tenness and ribaldries coming out of mens mouths,
and abounding in their lives? Could there be so
much constancy, fruitfulness, boldness, hardness
in sinning, against all fears, warnings, reproofs,
counsels, against Conscience, and the Dictates of
their Reason and common sense, were it not for
that evil Spirit that works in these Children of
disobe-

disobedience? Now if it be no fancy, that wicked men *walk in the spirit* (this you must grant, or else you must *conclude* that they are all Devils themselves) and if you grant it, can you conceive it to be but a fancy, that the Saints *walk in the spirit*? If the Devil works lies and oaths, and curses into the Hearts of sinners, sure you may well allow that the Spirit of God works duties, works a prayer or praises, &c. into the hearts of the Saints. Could a poor Christian, that hath so many corruptions within, so many Temptations without, so many weaknesses, hindrances, discouragements, ever follow the Lord in his holy wayes against them all, if he had no other Spirit than his own to carry him on? The Saints sure have as much need of that help which is from above, to carry them on in holiness unto life, as Sinners have of that which is from beneath, to carry them on in iniquity to destruction; and methinks you should not question, but the Spirit of God will be as active to stay, as the Devil is busie to destroy.

4. If walking in the Spirit be but a fancy, then God hath no People in the World, Rom. 8. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.* As many, that is, just so many, and no more: God hath no more Children in the World, than there are persons that are led by the Spirit; to be led by the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit, signifie one and the same thing: If then there be no such thing, nor no such persons in the World to be found, where then are Gods Children? God hath no Child, if this be so: You must write *the God of all the Earth childless*, a Father without a Childe, a King without a People; if these wise men

be *true men*, and *true men* you can very hardly call them, who having robbed the King of Saints of all his Subjects, and the Father of Lights of all his Children.

You see now to what a plain issue this matter is also brought: If you be in the right in this thing, then the Spirit of God must be unfaithful in his Office, God must be false in his promise; the Devil doth more to the damning, than the spirit of God doth to the saving of souls; and one of these two things will follow hence, either that the Devil is of more might than the Almighty Spirit, or that the God of love hath not so much love as the Devil hath malice; and lastly, that God hath no People in the world.

But it may be sinners, you will yet reply, Well, We will grant that this is true, that there are those that are led by the spirit, and walk in the spirit, but when you talk of so much Spirituality in Mortal men, of such high notions as living in the fellowship of the spirit; living in Heaven when you tell us of such Glorious light, such Raptures of Joy, such Extasies of Spiritual delights, here are the Fancies; These are the things which we cannot but account the foolish Dreames of deluded hearts.

And now you think you have hit at last. But is not this it which you say, The Spirit enlightens, but gives no light: The enlightened see no more than the blinde: The Spirit renews men, and yet they are not changed: The Spirit leads the Saints, and yet they follow him just as fast as those that have no legs: The Spirit dwells in them, and yet they have no more fellowship or acquaintance with him, than those that never saw him: The Spirit

Spirit assists, and yet gives no help. The Spirit comforts, and yet gives no joy; but after all he hath done, leaves them just as other men, and whatsoever they pretend to have more, is a meer cheat and delusion. The sum of all comes to this, The Spirit doth, and yet doth not; doth something, some great thing, and yet that something is just nothing.

But is there no such life of God, wherein the Lord having gotten the chief interest in the heart, hath also the Dominion of the life? Is there no such life, the main dealings and business whereof, is the pleasing and honouring of God, and the seeking that glory and honour which is from him? Must God be an underling to the World, and be put off with our spare hours which the World will allow him? We were even as good down-right to profess we own no God at all? or if we must have one, a *Baal*, or an *Ashtaroth*, a *Nisrock*, or a *Molech*, an Oxe, or a Calf, may serve us well enough for a God; a God to be so trampled on, or to be said unto, *stand aside*, when ever the World hath any thing for us to do.

Is there no such Spiritual life, the comforts whereof are Spiritual comforts, the pleasures and delights, Spiritual pleasures and delights? Are there no delights in God, who is a *Well of Life*, and the Fountain of all Blessedness? Have the Creatures their several sweetneses issuing from them, the Sun its light, the Fire its warmth, the Fig-tree its sweetness, the Olive-tree its fatness, the Fruits of the Earth their pleasant tastes and smell, the Instruments of Musick their melodious Ayres and sounds to gratifie and please our senses, and is the Fountain onely a dry and unsavory thing, when
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the Cisterns are so fresh and full? Have fleshly exercises their several pleasures? are the labours of the Husband-man, the Travels of the Merchant, so strangely sweetned by the gain and in-come of them? Are May-Games and Morrice-Dances, Sports and Playes, so delightfome to men, that they will sell their Souls for such Pleasures; and are they the Exercises of Religion onely, that have no ioyce nor sweetness in them? Is it Godliness onely that hath no bud, the stalk whereof yields no meat? Or are the delights and comforts hereof such flashy and airy things, that we cannot tell when we taste them, whether we be awake, or in a dream? Once more consider the Scriptures; *How excellent is thy loving kindenes, O God, therefore the Children of Men put their trust under the shadow of thy Wings: They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy House, and thou shalt make them drink of the Rivers of thy Pleasures, for with thee is the Fountain of Life, and in thy light we shall see light. Delight thy self also in the Lord, and he shall give thee thy heart desire. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time, when their Corn and Wine increased: with Joy shall they draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation. Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoyce, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts. Let him that readeth understand; do all these speak the life of Saints to be such a dry and dark, and impleasent life?*

Let me farther ask you these two Questions.

1. Are there any delights in Heaven? Is there any joy before the Throne, and in the face of God? Are there any pleasures at his right hand? Doth
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the Tree of Life, that stands in the midst of the Paradise of God, yield any pleasant fruit? Doth the Chrystal River that runs through the City of God, yield any pleasant streams? Are the exercises of glory, blessing, praises, and singing *Hallelajab, Hallelajab*, are there any pleasure in these? Speak Sinners, what do you think, are there any delights in Heaven?

2 Is there not something of that heavenly joy and delight let down to the Saints here? Whilst they bear a part in the same exercises, have they not a little share in the same pleasure? What means then the *earnest of their inheritance*, which is given here? The Apostle tells us, *Eph. 1. 13, 14.* that the Saints, after they had believed, were sealed with the holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. An earnest is a part of that, whereof it is an earnest given in hand; *The earnest of our inheritance is a part of the inheritance.*

Believe it Sinners, Gods Earnest is no Jest, God will not mock his Saints, though you do. As sinners to their cost, so Saints to their comforts, feel that Gods *Earnest is in earnest.*

As the Lord sometimes (though more seldome) causes some flashings of his wrath to flie out in the faces, to kindle in the souls, and burn in the bowels of some incorrigible sinners, as an earnest of those everlasting flames prepared for them, beginning their hell upon earth, so doth he let fall some handfuls of that Harvest, some drops of that new Wine; the fuller draughts whereof are reserved to that time, when they shall sit down with him in his Kingdome; and this is the *earnest of their inheritance*, something of the same joys, the same pleasures (for kind) with those that are laid up for them,
 and

and hereby assured to them. And is there not yet enough to convince you?

If you will still hold your own, and go about to perswade us that all this is but fanſie, we muſt give the ſame credit to you, that your ſelves would give to a man that was born blind, who had never ſeen either Sun or Star, and hearing you to diſcourſe of them, ſhould laugh at you for Phanaticks, and tell you there were no ſuch things as Sun, or Stars, or Light; you would believe your own eyes before the blind mans blind confidence, you would pity rather then credit him, and ſo muſt we you.

Do ye wonder there ſhould be ſuch things, and you not ſee them? The Riches of Chriſtians are hidden riches; The *Manna* of Saints is hidden *Manna*: The *white Stone* and the *new Name* are not within the Ken of vulgar eyes: Think not it is our pride or vanity thus to ſpeak: Doth not our Lord ſay, the ſame things? *Rev. 2. 17. No man knoweth it but he that hath it. A ſtranger ſhall not meddle with his joy.* The ſweetneſs of Religion lies deep, the rich Wines are in the Cellar, the rich Mines are in the bowels of the earth, the beſt of ſin is in ſight, the Flower & the Cream is at the top, and the Bottom and the Lees is at the bottoome; ſin is honey in the mouth, but wormwood in the belly. *Sinner*, you have not gone deep enough in Religion, to come to the pleaſure of it: And will you therefore ſay there is none in it? You may as well ſay there is no gall and wormwood in ſin, becauſe you have not yet met with a bitter drop; that all the anguiſh and horror that all thoſe pangs of miſery, thoſe gnawings, and grindings, and torments that are ſaid to be in ſin, are meer fanſies, becauſe you have not yet felt them:

But stay a while, you are not yet at the bottome : the dregs are yet some draughts lower : Oh the under-ground fruits of sin ! When these shall come up, then you shall taste what gall and gravel there is in it ; never think you are secure from sorrow, draught or two deeper may confute you with a witness. And so on the other side, there is no ground to suspect that the sweetness of Religion is a nothing, because some smatterers about it, which have only trifled upon the surface and outside of it, have not had the least taste of any such thing : The brackishness and bitterness of Religion is at top, the best is at bottome ; the Wine-cellar is lower then yet you have gone : If you would be perswaded to go deeper, to set in more closely and throughly with a godly life, your own censure would at length confute your censures ; & whatever you have heard spoken concerning the comforts and delights of holiness, you would say with the Queen of Sheba, *The one half was not told me.*

We will freely grant you, that all is not gold that glitters ; there are false fires, false joys, false comforts, which many pretenders to Christianity have boasted of, who yet have had no part nor lot in this matter ; and to such as these both Saints and Sinners have been but little beholding. The columnies that light upon them, and the blindness that abides on these, lie much upon the score of such false lights ; but because some men dream they are eating and drinking, or that they are rich, or making merry, will you therefore that are eating, or drinking, or rich, or rejoicing, conclude that you also are but in a dream ? because that there are Comets that shines amongst the Stars, are they all Comets ? Are there no Stars ?

because there are Glow-worms that shine, is the Sun but a Glow-worm?

Shall I add one word more? You that yet hold the same tune, and still cry out, *Fansie, fansie*, all is but *fansie*; tell me, that I may know that you are in earnest, and believe your own talk, tell me, dare any of you come and subscribe this with your hand; *This godliness which you have been here commending to me, with all its comforts, joys, and delights, I utterly renounce for ever; let me never know what any thing of this means, nor have my part hereafter with this godly people.* Dare you put your hand to this? It is some comfort to us, to hope that Religion hath an Advocate in the Consciences of its Adversaries.

But if it have not, yet know, Sinners, *That Wisdom shall be justified of her children.* And as for you, *Beware lest that come upon you, which is spoken by one of the Prophets; Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your dayes, which you will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*

The Application of the whole.

Use I. **H**AVING thus, by the help of God, vindicated the good ways of the Lord, from the Cavils and Reproaches of unreasonable men; and proved to you in this, and the precedent discourse, that the precisest Christians are the wisest men; and that that godliness, which is cried down for folly and *fansie*, is undoubtedly, and indispensably necessary to salvation; I shall now take you by the hand, and lead you on (as
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many of you as are willing to follow me to the practice of it. And in this undertaking, I shall apply my self,

1 To the Ungodly.

2 To the Godly.

1 I shall speak a few words to the ungodly. Speak now, O ye foolish sinners, Is Godliness of God? Is Christianity of Christ, or is it not? Is holiness the way of life, or can you hope to see life without it? If you say it is not of God, and will stand to it, produce your cause, bring forth your strong reasonings; onely I must tell you, if you say any thing, you had need look to it, that it be something of weight that you all-edge in a matter of such importance, ere you do conclude against it.

Let your Consciences speak, for to them (if you will forbear consulting with lust) I dare now appeal; let your Consciences speak, whose voice is this, *See that you walk circumspectly. Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life. God hath set apart him that is godly for himself. Follow holiness, without which no man shall see God.* Speak Sinners, whose words are these, and what do *Precisians* speak more, or other then this? Dare you say concerning the way of life, as it hath been described to you; If *this be godliness, let me never see God: I'll never see life, if this be the onely way to it.*

But if your Consciences tell you, this is of God, this strait and narrow way, is the onely way of life: Then, O consider, what is it that you have done, whom is it that you have reproached? Mean you still to hold your course, be it right or wrong, come life come death?

Is there any among you, whose heart smites him on the mouth, and whispers him thus in the ear,

blasphemest thou God, revilest thou his servants, and wilt thou still go on to pervert the good ways of the Lord? Is there any among you that doth enquire, what must I do to get into this way of life? Let such of you hearken unto me, whilest I give you these following directions.

Consider that I am now dealing with you about your entrance upon a godly life; my present business is to help you over the threshold, to get you within the straight gate; you must first be Christians, ere you can follow Christ, you must first enter into the strait gate, ere you can walk on in the narrow way. Now if ever you would attain to the beginning of godliness, take this course.

1. Get these three principles to be deeply fixed in your heart.

1. That the things which are eternal, are unspeakably more considerable, than the things which are but temporal.

2. That things not seen are as infallibly certain, as the things which are seen.

3. That according to your present choice, must be your eternal lot.

That the things which are Eternal, are unspeakably more considerable than the things which are but temporal; It's nothing so considerable what men enjoy, or suffer in this world, as what they shall enjoy, or may suffer in the world to come. There are good things temporal, and good things Eternal; and there are evil things temporal, and evil things Eternal; the good things Temporal, are Meat, and Drink, and Money, and Cloaths, and Ease, and Pleasures, and Credit, &c. and the good things Eternal, are Glory and Joy, and Bless, and everlasting blessedness: the evil things Temporal, are the sufferings

ferings, the losses and wants, the sorrow and shame, and scorn and torments, that men fall under, or lye under in this life; the evill things to come, are in one word, the Vengeance of Eternal Fire.

The good things and the evil things of this life, are more perceptible, having the advantage of their presence, and obviousness to our senses; the good things and the evil things to come, are less understood, having the disadvantage of their distance, and those clouds that do yet keep them out of sight; and hereupon those are slighted, and despised, and these are looked upon as the onely considerable things; till men be set right in their apprehensions of these things, it will be a vain and fruitless attempt, to perswade them to Christ; mistakes and misapprehensions here, are the grounds of mens miscarriages.

The difficulty of perswading sinners to Christ, lies mainly here; There is so much to be lost, and left for Christ, there is so much to be suffered & undergone; so much labour, so much hardship and trouble, that they cannot see how Christianity and Godliness can ever make them amends for what they are like to suffer: they will not be made sensible, that the things Eternal will ballance the things that are before them; they will not easily be perswaded, but that they shall be great losers by hearkning to Christ. Now, whence is it that men are thus foolish? If they did but clearly understand, and were deeply affected with the vast difference that is betwixt the vain glory of the world, and the weight of that glory that is to come; betwixt the light afflictions of this life, and the astonishing torments of the other world, they

would sure be of another mind; the great objections against godliness, would then be all answered, and removed.

Thou sayest Sinner, it is hard to part with thine ease, and thy pleasure, and thy liberty, and thy carnal contentments and delights, which if thou wilt follow Christ, thou seest must all go. But how wilt thou bear it, to be shut out of the everlasting Kingdom, to be shut out from the presence of God? Art thou indeed in the mind of that Atheist, that said, *He would not leave his part in Paris, for his part in Paradise?* Thou canst not indure the trouble and persecution of this world, but how wilt thou endure the torments and plagues of the other world? Oh, if thou wert but sensible, what that exceeding eternal weight of glory is, what thou wilt find everlasting death and darkness to be; then what significant things would all things that are now before thee appear to be! Satan would then want arguments to dissuade sinners from Christ, his tempting trade would quickly grow to be a poor trade, if the concerns of Eternity were clearly understood, and duly regarded.

When the Lord hath once shewed you the wonderful things of Eternity, the true riches, the enduring substance, the lasting joys, his rivers of pleasures, together with the worm that never die, and the fire that never shall be quenched: When the Lord hath shewed you what a heaven he hath prepared for the Saints, what an Oven he hath prepared for sinners, then neglect Christ if you can, then neglect holiness if you dare, then look down and see, what poor contemptible things, the pleasures and the sufferings here below will appear to be.

Oh,

Oh, study things Eternal more, launch forth into these Deeps, dwell upon the meditation of them till your hearts and all that is within you acknowledge and confess, that things present are nothing to things to come.

2. *That the things that are not seen, are as infallibly certain as the things that are seen.*

There is much Atheism and Infidelity in the hearts of men, and more then they are aware of; if they do not peremptorily conclude, there are no such things; yet, are there not many whose hearts do question at least, Whether there be any such things or no? We have read and heard of another World, but no Mortal ever saw it; who ever hath ascended up to Heaven, and hath brought us word what he hath seen there? Who ever hath descended into the Deep, and brought us up tidings thence? It may be, there may be no such master as another world; If we could speak with one that hath been there, that would be something to assure us. But what if it appear, that you may have as great certainty of these things, as if one should *rise from the dead*, and come and tell you? Do not the Scriptures tell you of such things? The Scriptures are a sure Word, and there is unquestionable evidence of the truth of what they speak; and you have as great reason to believe them, as if you had the Testimony of one raised from the dead, *Luke 16. 31. They have Moses, and the Prophets, if they will not hear them, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* Beloved, if you should see before your Eyes, persons rising from the Dead; if one should come down from Heaven, and come in here into this Congregation, in all his Glorious Robes, with his

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with his Palm in his hand, his Crown on his head, the joy and glory of the Lord shining forth in his Face; and should declare to you the wonderful things that his Eyes had seen, and his Heart had been satisfied and ravished with in the presence of God. If you should see another coming up out of the Deep with his Chaines of Darknes upon him; with the smell of that Infernal Fire and Brimstone about him, with the print of the Dragons clawes appearing in his Flesh, and the blacknes of that smoaking Furnace striking on his Face, and hideously roaring out the anguish he felt burning in his Bowels, should tell you, This is the state of them that know not God. If you should see to such sights appearing this hour here in the midst of you, would you not think you had reason to believe, there were an Heaven and an Hell? This word which is before you is a far greater, and a more certain Evidence, then if Tidings were thus brought to you by persons rising from the Dead. And if you will not give credit to this Testimony of God, neither would you give credit to any such Testimony. Sinners! believe God, and believe him who was once on Earth, and now daily speaks to you from Heaven; believe that Word which is before you; in which appear such Beames of Divine Light, such an impress of Divine purity, which hath been so attested by a Divine power in mighty Signes and Wonders, that you may as well question, Whether the Sun hath light, as whether his Word hath truth, believe this Word to be certain, and then question if you can, whether the things not seen are certain or no.

Let these two things sink into your hearts, (Sinners) be once settled and established in your hearts,
about

about the importance, and about the truth, and certainty of these Eternal things, and then you are gotten fairly onwards in your way towards Christ, and a Godly life.

If men were as sure that there is an Heaven and an Hell, such unspeakable Glory and such intolerable misery, and an Eternity of both; if men were as sure of this, and did as verily believe it, as they are sure of what their Eyes have seen and their Ears have heard, and their hands have handled; What a flying would there be out of the way of Death and Hell, and what a flocking would there be into the way of Life: Half the work of Preachers, and the hardest half (their perswading work) would then be at an end: There would be as much knocking at their doors for counsel, as now there is at sinners doors for their acceptance.

Oh Brethren, if you were once brought to this pass, if your unbelief were removed, your darkness taken away, your Souls awakened, your Eyes opened to see these marvellous things as unquestionable Truths; would you then scoff at pureness? would you then mock at godliness? would you then slight reproofs, or need any further conviction of your folly? You would have an Admonisher within you, a Remembrance within you, a Reprover within you; your own Consciences would plead with you for your entertaining of Christ, and embracing his Word, and would continually cry in your Ears, What meanest thou, O fool? Dost thou not see a Kingdome before thee, which may be thine, and art thou willing to lose it? Dost thou see that Gulf of Misery and Perdition with open mouth gaping for thee to devour thee? Arise sluggard, look

to

to thy self, least thou be undone before thou art aware.

3. *That according to your (choise) in this World your (lot) must be for ever in the world to come.*

Your chusing or refusing Christ and his holy ways is that which doth determine your Eternal state; chuse Christ, and you make Heaven sure to you; refuse Christ here, and you will be rejected of him for ever.

God doth offer you this choice, either the *strait and the narrow way*, with that life of blessedness, which is at the further end of this way: Or the *broad way*, with that Death and Destruction to which it leads: *Christ with his Yoak, his Cross, and his Eternal Crown, or the Devil with his golden mines, his Paradise and eternal Prison*: and all the parts of each of these offers are linked together: Chuse the Devils golden Mines and fleshly Paradise, and you must have his Prison too: Take Christs Yoak and his Cross, and you shall have his Crown, you cannot take the Devils Paradise and Christs Crown; if you will have his Pleasures, you must have his Prison. You cannot obtain life, but you must chuse the narrow way that leads to it.

Here is the choise, sinners, that God puts you to, this is the business of this World to choise for Eternity: And that which is the business of this life, is, the business of this hour. This very little piece of your time, and the choise you make now, may be it that will give a final determination what your Eternal state shall be: If you make an evil choise now, you may never have a minutes time to choise again for ever. Oh, if your hearts were sensible of this, that there is so much depending upon every honre of your liver, as *Life or Death, Heaven or Hell, Eternity*

nity, sure you could not but reason thus with your selves, Is it a time for me to stand all the day idle? To be laughing or sporting, or to be drudging and scraping for the muck of this Earth? Is this a time for me to stand trifling with Christ and the Gospel, to make so many delays, to make so many excuses; *The scarms are too high, the way is too strait, the yoke is too heavy, this I cannot part with, that I cannot bring my heart to subscribe to.* Is this the business that is now under debate, what my everlasting state must be? In which of the two Regions of Eternity my Lot shall fall; whether I shall be a Saint or a Devil, a vessel of honour, or a vessel of wrath? whether my dwelling shall be in everlasting blessedness, or in everlasting burnings? which way the scales do turn now, either for Christ or the world; Do they turn for everlasting? Sure if matters stand thus, I had need be serious and consider what I do. This is the first direction, get these three principles fixed in your hearts, that things Eternal are much more considerable then things Temporal, that things not seen are as infallibly certain, as the things that are seen, that upon your present choice depends your Eternal lot. Chuse Christ and his wayes, and you are blessed for ever; refuse and you are undone for ever. And then,

II. *Make your choice.*

Put your hearts to it, to turn either to the right hand or to the left, lay both parts before you, with every link of each; Christ with his Yoke, his Cross, and his Crown, or the Devil with his wealth, his pleasure and his curse: And then put your selves to it thus: Soul, Thou seest what is before thee, what wilt thou do? Which wilt thou have, either the Crown or the Curse? If thou chuse the Crown,

remember that the day thou takest this, thou must be content to submit to the Cross and Yoke, the service and the sufferings of Christ, which are linked to it. What sayest thou? Hadst thou rather take the gains and the pleasures of sin, and venture on the Curse? or wilt thou yield thy self a servant unto Christ, and so make sure the Crown?

If your hearts flie off, and would fain wave the business, and leave it undetermined, leave them not so. If you be onely unresolved, you are resolved. If you remain undetermined for Christ, you are determined for the Devil. Therefore give not off; but follow your hearts from day to day, let them not rest till the matter be brought to an issue, and see that you make a good choice.

This is your choosing the good part, God and your blessedness of the world to come for your portion and happiness; and in this is included, Your renouncing the world, and a worldly happiness.

III. *Imbarque with Christ.*

Adventure your selves with him, cast your selves upon his righteousness, as that which shall bring you to God: As a poor Captive Exile that is cast upon a strange Land, a Land of Robbers and Murderers, where he is ready to perish, and having no hope, either of abiding there, or escaping home with life, and meeting at length with a Pilot that offers to Transport him safely home, he imbarques with him, and ventures himself, and all he hath in his Vessel: Do you likewise; you are Exiles from the presence of God, and fallen into a Land of Robbers and Murderers: Your sins

are Robbers, your pleasures are Robbers, your Companions in sin are Robbers and Thieves: if you stay where you are you perish, and escape home of your selves you cannot: Christ offers, if you will venture with him, he will bring you home, and he will bring you to God: Will you say now to him, Lord Jesus, wilt thou undertake me, wilt thou bring me to God, bring me into the Land of Promise? With thee will I venture my self, I cast my self upon thee, upon thy blood, upon thy righteousness, upon thy faithfulness; I lay up all my hopes, and venture my whole interest, Soul and Body with thee.

This is your closing with Christ as your Priest, and in this is included your renouncing your own righteousness; you can never, you will never cast your selves on him alone, till all your self hopes have given up the ghost.

There be *two things* which must necessarily be supposed to a sinner coming to Christ:

1. *A deep sense of his sin and misery.*

2. *An utter despair of himself, and all things else besides Christ.*

1. *A deep sense of his sin and misery:* No man will regard a Saviour, that doth not see himself a Sinner: The whole regard not the Physician, Therefore it is said, That the Spirit of God, when he should come to Christianize the World, should in the first place convince the World of sin, *John 16. 8.* He shall convince the World of sin, he shall demonstrate them sinners, bring up their sins before their Eyes, bring home their sins upon their Consciences, and make them see themselves, and feel themselves the most vile and abominable of creatures: Sin hides it self from the sinners eyes,

and all its vileness and deformity; or if it come in sight, it presents it self to the sinner, as the Witch of Endor brought up the Devil before *Saul* in *Samuels* Mantle: It shews it self as the sinners god: Look how many sins evil men have, so many gods they have rising up to them. Their sins are their gods; the gods that feed them, they make a living of their sins; the gods that comfort and refresh them, they take pleasure in iniquity; the gods that shelter them and hide them, they strengthen themselves in their wickedness. But now the Spirit of God plucks off the mantle, and makes sin appear to be sin; makes all the sinners Gods appear to be so many Devils: brings forth the blackness and filchiness of sin into sight, makes the sinner to see himself an unclean and abominable thing; And withal, he brings forth the guilt of sin. sets all these Devils a tormenting the sinner, filling him with fear and terrour, and amazement. In this respect he is called, *Rom. 8.* the Spirit of Bondage, that works fear and trouble in the heart: The Spirit awakening a sleepy sinner, is a kind of awakening in Hell. Lord where am I! What mean these Legions round about me? These Chains and Fetters that are upon me? What means the black Roll before mine eyes, of curses, and wrath, and woes! Lord where am I! Have I been playing, and sporting, and making merry, and my soul in such a case as this! But is there no hope of escaping out of this wretched state? I see there is no abiding thus, I am but a dead man if I continue as I am. What may I do to be saved?

And when he is brought to this, there is some way made for his entertainment of Christ: Yea this is not all that is needful, but he must further be brought to,

2 And

2. *An utter despair of himself; and all things else besides Christ.* Being made sensible of his sin and his danger, a sinner will look out for help and deliverance; but he will look every where else, before he will look unto Christ: Nothing will bring in a sinner to Christ, but an absolute necessity. He will try to forsake his sins, will think of leaving his drunkenness and becoming sober; of leaving his adulteries and becoming chaste, and so see if by this means he may not escape. He will go to Prayers and Sermons, and Sacrament, and search out if there be not salvation in them: but all these though they be useful in their places, yet looking no further, the sinner sees there is no help in them: His righteousness cannot help him, this is but rags; his duties cannot help him, these may be reckoned among his sins: Ordinances cannot help, these are but empty Cisterne; and all tell him you knock at a wrong door, salvation is not in us. Well, the Lord be merciful to me, saith the Sinner, What shall I do? Abide as I am, I dare not, and how to help my self, I know not: my praying will not help me, my hearing will not help me; if I give all my goods to the Poor, if I should give my body to be burned, all this would not save my soul: Wo is me, what shall I do, and whether shall I go! And now, being brought to this distress, to this utter loss, his despair drives him to the only door of hope that is left open. Then Christ will be accepted, when he sees none but Christ can stead him: The Apostle tells us, *Gal. 3: 23. We were kept under the Law (shut up unto the Faith) that should afterwards be revealed: All other doors were shut up against, there was no hope of escaping, but by that one door that was left, open, The Faith that was afterwards to be revealed.*

As the besieged in a City, that have every Gate blocked up, and but one difficult passage left open, by which there is any possibility of escaping, thither they throng for the saving of their lives; they are shut up unto that door, to which (if there had been any other way open) they would never have come.

And as Christ will never be accepted, so can the sinner never be received of him, till he let go all other props, and trust on him alone. Christ will have no sharer with him in the work of saving souls. *If ye seek me, let these go their way*: As he said in another case; Let not only your sins go, but let your righteousness go, all the refuges of lies wherein you have trusted; let all go if you will have me to be a Refuge to you. I came not to call the Righteous, if I should, they would not come; or if they come, let them go as they come, let them go to their righteousness in which they trust, and let naked distressed sinners, distressed sinners come to me, who am come to this end, to seek and to save them that are lost.

Sinners, Will you come now? Will you venture here? For this year adventuring on Christ, you have this three-fold warrant:

1 Gods Ordination. This is he whom God the Father hath appointed, and sent into the World, to help and bring back his Exiles to himself, to save sinners: This is he whom God the Father hath sealed, *Job* 6. 27. hath marked him out for that chosen person, in whom is Salvation, hath sealed him his Commission, for the Redeeming and Reconciling the world to himself. As God said unto the three friends of *Job*, when he was angry with them *Job* 42. 8. Go to my Servant *Job*, and he shall offer sacri-

sacrifice for you, he shall pray for you; for him will I accept. So to sinners, Go, saith the Lord, to my servant Jesus, he shall offer sacrifice for you, he shall make reconciliation for you: Isa. 42. 1. Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2 Gods command; 1 Job. 3. 23. This is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ,

3 The Promise of God; 1 Pet. 2. 6. Behold I lay in Sion a chief Corner-stone, Elect precious; He that believeth on him, shall not be confounded.

Now having this three-fold warrant, the warrant of Gods Ordination, Command, and Promise; you may be bold to adventure on Christ, and to apply yourselves to him thus; Lord Jesus, here I am, a poor Captive Exile, a lost Creature, an enemy to God, under his wrath and curse. Wilt thou, Lord, undertake for me, reconcile me to God, and save my soul; do not, Lord, refuse me, for if thou refuse me, to whom then shall I go? Art not thou he, and he alone, whom God the Father hath sealed, the Saviour of sinners? The Lord God hath sent me to thee, hath bid me come, he hath commanded me to believe, and cast my self upon thee. Lord Jesus; wilt thou refuse to help a distressed creature, whom the Father hath sent to thee for thy help? If I had come on my own head, or in mine own name, thou mightest well have put me back; but since I come at the command of the Father, reject me not; Lord help me, Lord save me. Art thou not he, concerning whom the Father hath promised, He that believeth on him, shall not be confounded. I come Lord, I believe

Lord, I throw my self upon thy grace and mercy; I cast my self upon thy blood and bowels, do not refuse me, I have no whether else to go; here I'll stay, I will not stir from thy door; on thee I'll trust, and rest, and venture my self; God hath laid my help on thee, and on thee I'll lay my hope for pardon, for life, for salvation, if I perish, I'll perish on thy shoulders; if I sink, I'll sink in thy Vessel; if I die, I'll die at thy door; bid me not go away, for I will not go.

IV. *Resign, and deliver up your selves to God in Christ.*

2 Chron. 30. 8. *Yield your selves to the Lord; that is, as his servants, give up the dominion and government of your selves to Christ, Rom. 6. 13. Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield your selves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members, as instruments of righteousness unto God, Ver. 16. To whom ye yield your selves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey: Yield your selves to to the Lord, that you may henceforth be the Lords; I am thine, saith the Psalmist, Psal. 119. Those that yield themselves to sin, and the World, their hearts say, Sin, I am thine; World, I am thine; Riches, I am yours; Pleasures, I am yours, I am thine, saith the Psalmist, devoted to thy fear, dedicated to thy service; I am thine, save me: Give your selves to Christ sinners, be devoted to his fear.*

And this giving your selves to him, must be such, as supposes that you be heartily contented:

- 1 That he appoint you your work.
- 2 That he appoint you your station.
- 3 That

1- That he appoint you your work, that he put you to whatsoever he pleaseth; servants, as they must do their Masters work, so they must do that work which their Master appoints them, they must be for any work their Master hath for them to do; they must not pick and chuse, this I will do, and that I will not do; they must not say, this is too hard, or this is too mean, or this may be well enough let alone. Good servants when they have chosen their Master, will let their Master chuse their work, and will not dispute his Will, but do it.

Christ hath many services to be done, some are more easie and honourable, others more difficult and disgraceful; some are futable to our inclinations and interests, others are contrary to both: In some we may please Christ, and please our selves, as when he requires us to feed and cloath our selves, to provide things honest for our own maintenance; yea, and there are some spiritual duties that are more pleasing then others; as to rejoyce in the Lord, to be blessing and praising of God, to be feeding our selves with the delights and comforts of Religion; these are the sweet works of a Christian. But then, there are other works wherein we cannot please Christ, but by denying our selves; as giving and lending, bearing and forbearing, reproving men for their sins, withdrawing from their societies, witnessing against their wickedness, owning and confessing Christ and his Name, when 'twill cost us shame and reproach; sailing against the wind, swimming against the tide, steering contrary to the temper and disposition of the times; pinching upon the flesh, parting with our ease, our liberties, relations, and accommodations for the Name of our Lord Jesus, with much work of this kind,

It is necessary Beloved, to sit down and consider what it will cost you, to be the servants of Christ, and take through survey of the whole business of Christianity, and not engage hand over head to you know nor what.

First, See what it is that Christ doth expect, and then yield your selves to his whole will. Do not think of indenting, and compounding, or making your own terms with Christ, that will never be allowed you.

Go to Christ and tell him, Lord Jesus, if thou wilt receive me into thine house, if thou wilt but own me as thy servant, I will not stand upon terms; impose on me what condition thou pleasest, write down thine own Articles, command me what thou wilt, put me to any thing thou seeest good, Let me come under thy roof, let me be thy servant, and spare not to command me. *I will be no longer mine own but give my self up to thy will in all things.*

2 That he shall appoint you your station and condition, whether it be higher or lower, a plentiful, or a wanting, a prosperous, or an afflicted estate. Be content, that Christ should both choose your work, and choose your condition, that he should have the command of you, and the disposal of you; make me what thou wilt, Lord, and set me where thou wilt: Let me be a Vessel of Silver or Gold, or a Vessel of Wood or Stone, so I be a Vessel of Honor, of whatsoever form or metal, whether higher or lower, finer or coarser, I am content; If I be not the head, or the eye, or the ear, one of the nobler and more honorable instruments thou wilt employ, let me be the hand, or the foot, one of the most laborious, and lowest, and most contemptible of all the servants of my Lord, let my dwelling be
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in the dunghill, my portion in the wilderness, my
name and my lot be amongst the hewers of wood,
or drawers of water, among the door-keepers of thy
house; and where, where I may be serviceable and
useful; I put myself wholly into thy hands; Put
me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou
wilt, put me to doing, put me to suffering, let me be
employed for thee, or laid aside for thee, exalted for
thee, or trodden under foot for thee; let me be
full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me
have nothing, I freely and heartily resign all to thy
displeasure and disposal.

This now is your closing with Christ, as your King
and Sovereign Lord; and in this is included, your
renouncing the Devil and his works, the flesh and its
lusts, together with your consenting to all the Laws
and Ordinances of Christ; and his Providential Go-
vernment.

Beloved, such a close with Christ, as you have been
here exhorted to, is that, wherein the Essence of Chri-
stianity lies: when you have chosen the incorruptible
crown, that is, when you have chosen God to be your
portion and happiness; when you have adventured
and laid up your whole interest, and all your hopes
with Christ, casting your selves wholly upon the me-
rit of his Righteousness, when you have understand-
ingly and heartily resign'd and given up your selves to
him, resolving for ever to be at his command, and at
his disposal: when you are Christians indeed, and ne-
ver till then. Christ will be the Saviour of none but
of his servants: He is the Author of Eternal Salva-
tion to those that obey him, *Heb. 5*. Christ will have
no Servant but by consent, His people are a willing
people, *Psal. 110*. And Christ will accept of no con-

sent but in full, to all that he requires, he will be all in all, or he will be nothing.

V. Confirm and compleat all this by Solemn Covenant.

Give your selves to the Lord as his *Servants*, and bind your selves to him as his *Covenant-Servants*; Jer. 30. 21. *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me*; Isa. 44. 5. *One shall say, I am the Lord*; another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord.

Upon your entering into Covenant with God, the Covenant of God stands firm to you, God gives you leave, every man, to put his own name into the Covenant; grant if it be not found there at last, it will be your own fault; if it be not there, there will be nothing found in the whole Covenant belonging unto you. If it be there, all is yours; if you have come into the bond of the Covenant, you shall have your share in the blessings of the Covenant, Jer. 30. 21, 22. *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach to me. And ye shall be my people; and I will be your God. Engage to me, and I stand engaged to you*; Deut. 26. 17, 18. *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, to walk in his Ways, and to keep his Statutes, and his Commandments, and his Judgments, to hearken to his Voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee. Observe it, The same day that they avouched the Lord to be their God, the same day the Lord avouched them to be his peculiar people: The same day that they engaged to keep the Commandments of God, the same day the Lord engageth to keep his Promise with them.*

There

There is a twofold Covenanting with God, *In Profession*, and *in Reality*: and entering our Names, and an engaging our *Hearts*: The former is done in Baptism, by all that are Baptized, who by receiving the Seal of the Covenant, are visibly, or in profession entered into it: The latter is also twofold:

1. *Virtual*. Which is done by all those that have sincerely made that closure with God in Christ fore-mentioned: Those that have chosen the Lord, embarked with Christ, resigned up, and given themselves to the Lord, are all engaged persons have virtually Covenanted with him.

2. *Formal*. Which is our binding our selves to the Lord by solemn Vow or Promise, to stand to our choice, &c. And this may be, either only inward in the Soul Or outward, and expressed, either by words lifting up of the hand, subscribing the hand, or the like; And by how much [the more express our solemn Covenanting with God is, by so much the more sensibly and strongly it is like to hold our hearts to him.

Now that which I would perswade you to, is this Solemn and express covenanting with God; Providence hath lately brought to my hand the Advice of a dear Friend, and faithful Labourer in the work of the Lord about this matter, together with an excellent Form of words, composed for the help of weaker Christians, and aptly accommodated to all the substantials of our *Baptismal Covenant*, which having found great acceptance with many precious Christians, I do with much zeal, and great hope of good success, for the establishing of Souls in Holiness and Comfort, commend it to the use not only of young Converts, but of the
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more grown Christians, that have not experimented
this or the like course.

And in order to the putting this matter into practice, I shall first give you these few directions.

First, Set apart some time, more than once, to be spent in searce before the Lord.

1. In seeking earnestly his special assistance and gracious acceptance of you.

2. In considering distinctly all the Termes or Conditions, of the Covenant, as they have been laid before you, in the Directions already given you, and are also expressed in the form hereafter proposed.

3. In searching your hearts whether you either have already, or can now, freely make such a closure with God in Christ, as you have been exhorted to. In special, Consider what your sins are, and examine whither you can resolve to forgo them all. Consider what the Lawes of Christ are, how holy, strict and spiritual, and whether you can upon deliberation make choice of them all (even those that do most crosse your worldly interests, beloved sins, and corrupt inclinations) as the rule of your whole life. Be sure you be clear in these matters, see that you do not lye unto God, Consider, whether however corruption will play its part, and be pulling you back, yet the prevailing part of you will be for God and Christ, and all his holy wayes.

Secondly, Compose your spirits into the most serious frame possible, suitable to a transaction of so high importance.

Thirdly, Lay hold on the Covenant of God, and rely upon his promise of giving grace, and strength, whereby you may be enabled to performe your promise. Trust not to your own strength, to the strength of your own resolutions, but take hold on his strength.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, resolve to be faithful. Having engaged your hearts, opened your mouths, and subscribed with your hands to the Lord, resolve in his strength never to go back.

Lastly, Being thus prepared, on some convenient time set apart for the purpose, set upon the work, and in the most solemn manner possible, as if the Lord were visible present before your Eyes, fall down on your knees, and spreading forth your hands towards Heaven, open your hearts to the Lord, in these or the like words.

O Most dreadful God, for the passion of thy Son, I beseech thee accept of thy poor prodigal now prostrating himself at thy door; I have fallen from thee by mine iniquity, and am by Nature a Son of Death, and a thousand-fold more the Childe of Hell by my wicked practice; but of thine infinite Grace thou hast promised Mercy to me in Christ, if I will but turn to thee with all my heart: Therefore upon the Call of thy Gospel, I am now come in, and throwing down my Weapons submit my self to thy mercy.

*The Terms of our
Communion are ei-
ther from which,
or to which.*

And

*The Terms from
which we must
turn, are sin, Sa-
tan, the World,
and our own
Righteousness,
which must be
thus renounced.*

And because thou requirest,
as the condition of my peace
with thee, that I should put away
mine Idols, and be at defi-ance
with all thine enemies, which I
acknowledge I have wickedly fi-
ded with against thee, I here from the bottom
of my heart renounce them all, firmelie cove-
nancing with thee, not to allow my self in
any known sin, but conscientiously to use
all the meanes that I know thou hast prescri-
bed, for the death and utter destruction of
all my corruptions: And whereas I have
formerly inordinately and idolatrously let out
my affections upon the world; I do here re-
signe my heart to thee that made it, humble
protesting before thy glorious Majestic, that
it is the firm Resolution of my heart, and
that I doe unfeignedly desire Grace from thee,
that when thou shalt call me hereunto I may
practice this my resolution, through thy
assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me
in this world, rather then to turn from thee
to the wayes of sin, and that I will watch a-
gainst all its Temptations, whether of pro-
sperity or adversity, lest they should with-
draw my heart from thee, beseeching thee
also to help me against the Temptations
of Satan, to whose wicked suggestions, I
resolve,

resolve, by thy Grace, never to yield my self
a Servant. And because my own righte-
ousness is but menstruous rags, I renounce
all confidence therein, and acknowledge
that I am of my self a hopeles, helpless,
undone creature, without righteousness or
strength.

And forasmuch as
thou hast of thy bot-
tomless Mercie offer-
ed most Graciouslie
to me wretched sinner, to be again my God
throug Christ, if I woul accept of thee: I
call Heaven and Earth to record this day,
that I do here solemnly a-

*The Terms to which we
must turn, are either
ultimate or mediate*

vouch thee for the Lord
my God, and with all
possible veneration, bow-
ing the neck of my Soul
under the feet of thy most sacred Majestic, I
do here take thee the Lord *Jehovah*, Father,
Son, and Holie Ghost, for my portion and
chief good, and do give up *my self*, bodie and
soul for *thy servant*, promising and vowing to
serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the
daies of *my life*.

*The ultimate is God,
the Father, Son, and
Holy Ghost, who must
be thus accepted.*

And

*The mediate terms, are ex-
Principal, or lesſ princi-
pal.*

*The principal is Chriſt
the Mediator, who muſt thus
be embraced.*

And ſince thou haſt
appointed the Lord
Jeſus Chriſt, the one-
ly means of coming
unto thee, I do here
upon the bended knees of my Soul, accept of
him as the onely new and living way, by which
ſinners may have acceſs to thee, and do here
ſolemnly joyn my ſelf in a marriage covenant
to him:

O bleſſed Jeſus, I come to thee hungry
and hardly beſtead, poor and wretched,
and miſerable, and blinde, and naked, a
moſt loathſome polluted wretch; a guilty
condemned Malefactor, unworthy for ever
to waſh the feet of the ſervants of my Lord,
much more to be ſolemnly married to the
King of Glorie: But ſuch ſuch is thine unpa-
rallel'd love, I do here with all my power
accept thee, and do take thee for my head
and husband, for better for worſe, for
richer for poorer, for all times and condi-
tions, to love, and honour, and obey thee
before all others, and this to the death,
I embrace thee in all thine offices: I re-
nounce mine own worthineſs, and do here
avow thee to be the Lord my Rightcouſneſs:
I renounce mine own wiſdome, and do here
take thee for mine onely Guide: I renounce
mine

mine own will, and take thy will for my Law.

And since thou hast told me that I must suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with thee to take my lot, as it falls, with thee, and by thy grace assisting to runne all hazards with thee, verily supposing, that neither life nor death shall part between thee and me.

And because thou hast been pleased to give me thy *The lest principles, are: the Laws of Christ, which must be thus observed,* holy Laws, as the rule of my life; and the way in which I should walk to thy Kingdome; I do here willingly put my neck under thy yoke, and let my shoulder to thy burden, and subscribing to all thy Laws, as holy, just and good; I solemnly take them, as the rule of my words, thoughts; and actions; promising, that though my flesh contradict and rebell, yet I will endeavour to order and govern my whole life according to thy direction; and will not allow my self in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

Onely because through the frailty of my flesh, I am subject to many failings; I can bold humbly to protest, That unallowed mis-

and carnages, contrary to the tested bene-
and resolution of my heart, shall not make
void this Covenant; for so thou hast said.

Now Almighty God, searcher of hearts,
thou knowest that I make this Covenant with
thee this day, without any known guile
or reservation, beseeching thee, that if thou
discoverst any flaw or falshood therein, thou
wouldst discover it to me; and help me to do
it aright.

And now glory be to thee, O God the
Father, whom I shall be bold from this day
forward, to look upon as my God and Fa-
ther; That ever thou shouldst find out such
a way for the recovery of undone sinners;
Glory be to thee, O God the Son, who hast
loved me and washed me from my sinnes in
thine own blood, and art now become my
Saviour and Redeemer: Glory be to thee,
O God the Holy Ghost, who by the Finger of
thine Almighty power hast turned about my
heart from sin to God.

O dreadful *Jehovah*, the Lord God omni-
potent, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, thou art
now become my Covenant friend, and I
through thine infinite Grace, am become thy
Covenant-servant, *Amen*, So be it: And the Co-
venant which I have made on earth, let it be ra-
tified in Heaven.

The

The Authors words.

THIS Covenant I advise you to make, not onely in heart, but in word, not onely in word, but in writing: and that you would with possible reverence spread the writing before the Lord, as if you would present it to him as your Act and Deed. And when you have done this, set your hand to it. Keep it as a memorial of the solemn transactions that have passed between God and you, that you may have recourse to it in doubts and temptations.

And now Beloved, having shewed you the way the Father, give me leave to be instant with you, in pressing you to hearken to me herin, to come and joyn your selves thus to the Lord. And if you will not be perswaded to this solemn and express way of Covenanting with him, which I believe you will find a great advantage, and do therefore make it my great request unto you) yet, if you will not do that, take heed you refuse not to engage your hearts to the Lord, and make a full closure with Christ, upon all the particular terms laid before you, till that be done, I must be bold to tell you again, as I have told you already, that you are short of Christianity, strangers from the Covenant of Promise and Alliance from the Commonwealth of Israel.

Breakers, the Lord God hath sent me among you upon the same Errand, as *Abraham* sent his servant, *Gen. 24. To take a wife for his Son, to espouse you to Christ*. I am not without fear, as that servant was not, that some of you will not follow me; but if the Lord see it good to send his Angel before me, to make my way prosperous, if the Lord give me success in this great thing, that I may thus bring you into Covenant with him, I shall therein have performed the main part of my Ministerial work among you, I shall have espoused you to Christ, married you to that one Husband; I shall have brought you within the strait gate, and set your foot safe in to that narrow way that leads to life, and have laid the foundation of your following the Lord in holiness and comfort here, and of living with him in blessedness for ever. For,

1 When once you are sincerely in Covenant, from thenceforth you have a God that you may call your own, to whom you may have free access, with whom you may be sure to find grace, to help in all times of need. How blessed is his condition, who is able to say, *I have no friend in the world, but I have a God in Heaven; I have many enemies, but I have a God; I have no house, nor money, nor lands, but I have a God; I have troubles, I have sins that are a daily torment and vexation to me, but I have a God, a God to feed me, a God to succour me, a God to shelter me, a God to pardon me, a God to sanctifie me, to save me.*

2 From the time of this your Covenant Union with Christ, you have the blessing of communion with him.

3 Whatsoever is Christ's, is now become yours.

1. *Yours*; the husband gives the wife leave to set her name on all his goods, and all that Christ hath, you may now write your name upon it, & say boldly, *all this is mine*; his prayers, his tears, his obedience, his blood, his spirit, all are mine, because he is mine.

2. Whatsoever is yours, is his; your sufferings, your sins, your debts, your wants are all upon your husband. Christ says to you, as the old man, *Judg. 19.20.* to the Levite, *Let all thy wants be on me*; and so all thy debts and straits, and fears, and troubles, let them all be on me.

3. Christ and you shall have your lot together; God deals with Christ and a Believer, as one and the same party who must be absolved and condemned, stand or fall; live or die together. In Christ's being justified, your justification is secured; in Christ's Resurrection, your Resurrection; in Christ's Glorification, your Glorification is secured forever. *Because I live, ye shall live also.* This is the portion, this is the Inheritance of all Gods Covenanting Servants.

You that are yet in your sins, in your old Covenant with Death, and agreement with Hell, will you yet be persuaded by what hath been said, to say one to another, *Come let us break these bonds of unbelief, and cast these cards from us; come let us go over to Christ, let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, that never shall be forgotten.*

You that are sincerely come within the bonds of this Covenant of the Lord, the Lord is henceforth become your God. Christ is henceforth become your Saviour, you have shot the Gulf; that good work is begun, which the Lord will perform to the

day of Christ; you are gotten within the gate, you are entered into the Path of Life.

2. In the next place therefore, I shall give some advice to the godly; or those that are already in Christ, whom I shall direct:

1. To a right performance of holy duties; these four duties especially, Prayer, holy Medication, Self-examination, and renewing their Covenant.

2. To a right improvement of holy Duties.

3. To the carrying on an holy course.

In all which, though I shall apply my self especially to those that are in Christ, yet I shall also give some farther helps to those that are yet out of Christ.

Before I shall enter upon the Directions for the right performance of holy Duties, it will not, I hope, be lost labour, if I prefix a word of encouragement to duty, by laying before you the influences which holy duties will have upon the carrying on a holy life, which I shall dispatch in these four particulars.

1. *Duties are the exercise of Grace.* Grace put of exercise grows quickly out of case; Idleness breeds the humours and diseases in the body, and no less in the soul; stirring keeps us warm and healthful. Now Duties are the stirrings and exercises of the soul. Reading of the word is not the exercise of the eye only, but of the understanding; Prayer is not an exercise of the tongue only, but of the heart; in all the faculties of the soul on work, it sets the several graces on work, it sets faith on work, it sets hope and holy desires on work; and grace kept in action, will be by its own nature

able and powerful in the whole world.
 2. In Duties we have an intimate converse with
 God. Therefore they are sometimes called, *Our
 drawing nigh to God*, Lev. 10. 3. *I will be sanctified
 in them that come nigh me.* Sometimes, *Our meet-
 ing with God*, Amos 4. 12. *Prepare to meet thy God,
 O Israel;* to meet with a *Present*, as Jacob met his
 angry Brother; to meet him with a *Prayer*, and
 supplication, Exod. 25. 32. *There will I meet them*
when the Saints go up to meet the Lord, the Lord
comes down to give them a meeting: Sometimes,
Our visiting of God, *Isay 26. 16. In their trouble they*
have visited thee. When God visiteth his people with
 a *Rod*, they visit him with a *Prayer*; when we come
 to Duty as we ought, we put our selves under Gods
 eye, we set the Lord before our face, it's necessa-
 ry to the right performance of Duties, that we
 have right and clear apprehensions of God, deep
 impressions of the Majesty of God, of his Omnipot-
 ence, Omnipresence, Holiness, Goodness and
 Faithfulness upon our hearts; This is required in
 that forementioned expression, *I will be sanctified in*
them that come nigh me. Now what an Influence will
 this have upon the upholding and carrying on the
 life of God in us, to have daily such a sight of God
 before our eyes, and such a sense of God upon our
 hearts.

3. In Duties we obtain new supplies, and fresh in-
 fluences from God. The flourishing state of a Chri-
 stian is set forth, *Isay 58. 11. by a well-watered Gar-
 den*, and *Jer. 31. 12. it is promised, They shall*
come and flow together to the goodness of the Lord for
heat, and for *Corn*, and for *wine*, and for *Oyl*.
 and their *soul shall be as a well-watered Garden*.

Where observe these three things:

1. That the watering of the soul is from the goodness of the Lord; all the dews and showers of Grace are from above, our Springs do not rise in our own Gardens: *All my Springs are in thee.*

2. All the influences of the grace and goodness of the Lord, are gotten down by your applying your selves to him in duty: That is the meaning of that expression, *They shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord,* they shall assemble and come together to seek the Lord.

3. The People of God in their addresses to him in Duty, though it be but for a supply of things temporal, do get something for their souls; *They shall come for Wheat, and for Wine, &c. And their (souls) shall be in a well-watered Garden.* We never come to pray for any temporal mercy, and pray as we should, but our souls are gainers thereby. A Christian cannot come near the Throne of Grace for any thing, but his heart hath a share in the Blessing. And there are three Reasons for it.

1. A Christian never prays for temporal mercies, but he hath some words or other to speak for his soul.

2. Prayer, whatever it be for, is the souls drawing nigh to God, and exercising it self on God: And the soul never goes to God, but it brings back something of God upon it, even then when it may be denied the temporal mercy it seeks: As when a Saint is praying for a Sinner, and God will not hear him for that Sinner, yet he loses not that Prayer, but hath it returned into his own bosom. So when the soul is praying for the concernment

the outward man, though it be denied in its particular request, yet its prayer shall not be lost to itself.

3 Temporal mercies obtained as a return of prayer, are *soul-blessings*.

But now when the matter of our requests is particularly for our souls: When Grace is that we come for; when love, and life, and zeal, and spiritual strength, is that we come for; when the watering of a dry and barren, and the refreshing of a weary heart, is that we seek for, shall our souls then be left barren, and weary, and empty away.

Our hearts are as *Cisterns*, which however sometimes they may be full of water, yet if there be not a supply from the *Well*, the waters and the *Cistern* will waste, and mud, and at length dry away. Dances are our *labouring at the Pump*, which will keep the *Cisterns* full. *Isa. 12.3. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the Wells of Salvation.*

Christian, thou complainest thy heart is barren and dead, and dry, and fit for nothing. Why is there not a *Well* by thee, where there is water enough to refresh and fill thee? Why dost thou no oftner let down thy *Pitcher*, or labour at the *Pump*, why art thou no oftner with thy God? Thy heart wants watering, get thee oftner to the *Well*; more praying, more fasting, more conversing with Christ, studying the Gospel, searching and locking the Promises, would quickly get thee into a better plight. He that is much with God, is rich in grace. Thou art not so much straitened, thou canst not be brought so poor, and lean, and out of case, but thou knowest where there is enough to fetch thee up again, thou knowest where

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there

there is a Well, that hath not only water enough, butting wine, but Wine, and Milk, and Honey enough; but thou must go often for it, if thou wilt have the benefit of it; Go therefore, and let down thy Pitcher, and thou needest not fear its coming up empty. Only in exercising thy self, in duty, take heed thou mistak'st not the Pitcher for the Well; take heed thou fix not thine eye on duty, as if this were thy Christ, thy Fountain out of which thou mayest be supplied. Duties are but the pipes, it is the Well that is the Fountain from whence all the water comes.

Duties are our conflicting with corruption, or striving against sin. When ever we are striving with God, we are thereby striving against sin. Duty and sin contend for the Victory; whilst Duty holds up, sin goes down: when Duty flags, sin gets up. Daily Prayer will make us weary of iniquity; or our iniquity will quickly make such praying a weariness unto us: it is not for the interest of the flesh to suffer the heart to be much in prayer, or other duties, and therefore we find for the whole Generation of carnal men, a little of it must serve their turn.

There is no such way for Christians to be revenged on sin, and to see their desires on this Enemy, as to bring it before the Lord. They never fight against it with greater zeal, or with more success, then *when well knee'd*. When the sinner kneels in earnest before his God, his lusts must quickly kneel to him; our confession of sin, and laying it open before the Lord, our complaining to the Lord of it, our crying to the Lord against it, pressing him upon his Promise, upon his Cove-

nant

and to help against it; these are the mighty chains
series our sins can make, to the beating down of
strong holds: When the Lord hears the groanings of
his *Israel*, under their oppressing *Egyptians*, he will
visit and relieve them. Christians tell one another,
how sad it is with them, what woful work they have
with a proud heart, or a covetous heart, or an hard
heart, or an hypocritical heart; and you may tell one
another such sad stories long enough, and find little
help: Goe tell thy God of thy sins, carry them be-
fore the Throne of Grace, make thy complaints a-
gainst them there, and there thou wilt find compa-
sion and deliverance.

Now gather up these four particulars together,
consider them well, and then you will see, you that
intend holiness in earnest, what great reason you
have to set close in with Duties, and to accept of
those Directions which shall now be tendered unto
you.

The first sort of Directions are such as concern
the right performance of the Duty of Prayer; the ad-
vice I shall give you touching this, take in these four
particulars.

1. *Bring your selves, and hold your selves to a fre-
quent and constant performance of this duty.*

There must be *performance*, or there cannot be
right performance: Those that pray not, or but
seldome, is a shewd signe that the root of the mat-
ter is not in them; they that can live without
prayer are dead while they are alive: Prayer is the
first fruits of Christianity: It was said of *Saul*, as
spoken that he was a Convert, *Behold he prayeth*.
The living *Childe* comes crying into the World.

and

and it is a token of life, so it is a means by which
the New Life is nourished. Prayer is a Christians
key to unlock the Store-house and the Treasuries
of Souls. he that can pray, God hath given
him a key to all his Treasures. Prayer will not on-
ly unlock the Clouds as *Elijahs* prayer did, and
bring down Rain to refresh the dry and parched
Earth, but it will unlock Heaven too. It will un-
lock the Ark and the Mercy seat, and get downe
Spiritual blessings on the Soul. Praying is a Chri-
stians knocking at the Gate of Heaven, that knock-
ing to which the promise is made, *Matthew 7. 7.*
Knock and it shall be opened. The word which the
Lord speakes to us is Gods knocking at our doores;
Rev. 3. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock,*
and praying is our knocking at the Lords door, at
the Gate of Heaven, that this may be opened. By
the way learn, that if you will not hear God knock,
it is just to hear not yours. If Gods voice may not
be heard on Earth, your voice will not be heard in
Heaven; fear not, you shall be heard, if you will hear;
hear him that speaks to you from Heaven, and your
cry shall enter into Heaven.

Our Soules will never thrive or flourish, unless
the Rain and the Showers of Heavenly Grace de-
scend and fall upon them, and we cannot look that
those Showers should come down, unless we look
up.

Persons that pray not, may be written among the
Heathens, *Jer. 10. 25.* *Fear out thy fury upon the*
Heathen, and the Families that call not on thy Name.
Among the Prophane ones of the Earth, who are de-
scribed by this Character, *Psalms 42. 4.* *They call not*
upon God, they are altogether become filthy and abominable.

able, there is none that doth good; they call not on God.

Where Prayer is not, there is usually cursing and swearing, and every abomination; look upon the non-praying persons, look upon the non-praying families among you, and see how little good there is to be found; see if they be not as so many dead and dry Trees, on which no Spiritual fruit appears, as so many dark holes, into which no Spiritual light doth ever shine, as so many filthy sinks, in which every vile thing lodges.

Beloved, I have often pressed this Duty on you, both *personal secret Prayer*, that there be not one person found among you that prays not; and *Family joynt Prayer*, that there be not one Family found among you, among whom God is not thus worshipped; I have often pressed this upon you, and given you particular helps and Directions about it, and have not been negligent to put you in remembrance of it, so that if there be prayerless persons or families found among you, the guilt of it must lie at your own doors.

But will you yet hearken to me in this thing? Will you give your selves to prayer? No word that is spoken to you for the good of your Soules, will ever prosper with you, if this Word prosper not, it is in vain for me to perswade you to live a Godly life, if you will not be perswaded to live a praying life. Would you ever come to any thing, see then that this Exhortation doe not come to nothing, be ye therefore serious, *Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer*, 1 Pet. 4. 7. Be ye instant, be constant in Prayer; Set up your resolutions
and

and at your times; set your times, and keep your times; do not put off this Duty, by pretending you pray always every day, and every hour; as the presence of an every dayes Sabbath comes just to no Sabbath, so it is usually in the case of prayer, some Carnal wretches praying alwayes is not praying at all: *Get thee into thy Closet*, saith Christ, get thee a place, set thee a time, wherein thou sayest *vacare Deo*, wherein thou mayest make it thy business to seek the Lord.

Brethren, I say again, if you will not suffer me to prevail with you in this thing. I may even spare my labour of speaking any other things to you, wherein I shall have no hope of success, if I speed not here: Some among you in some private Conferences I have had with you, have given me some good hopes of the work of grace begun upon your hearts: I have found that there hath been still a neglect of daily prayer, this hath struck such a damp upon my spirit, as hath brought down those hopes to be even almost as low as nothing, and by experience I have found, that such persons, as upon advice and warning would not afterwards be brought to the constant exercise of this duty, if they have retained any favour of Religion at all, have yet from year to year been at a stand, and not the least sign of any improvement hath been to be seen. If ever therefore you will hearken to me in any thing that I tender for your souls good, deny me not in this, set upon the daily exercise of secret prayer; and if you be resolved on the performance, I shall then be encouraged in the next place to help you on in the right performance. Therefore.

2. Come to pray with an *actual* and *great* expectation
of obtaining *Grace* and *help* from *God*.

Do not barely impose this duty upon you, as your task, but excite and encourage your selves to it, by looking for a return: think what it is that you would have, and look to receive it: The reason why we obtain no more in prayer, is, because we expect no more: God usually answers us according to our own hearts: Narrow hearts and low expectations have usually as little as they look for or desire: large expectations are ordinarily answered with large returns: Expectation will put life into action; you will then pray with most enlarged hearts, when you are most full of hopes, the reward that is looked for in the Evening will much encourage and quicken the labour of the day, fear not to expect too much from Heaven: Be not straitned in in your own Bowels, and you shall not be straitned in the God of bowels: open thy Mouth wide and he will fill it: God will never upbraid his Beggars for looking for too great an Almes; he hath enough to supply them, and he hath a heart to bestow it: God will never say to you, you are too bold, you ask too much; too much Grace, too much helpe, why cannot less content you? God hath given you commission to ask what you will, not to the one half, but the whole of his Kingdome; the Kingdome you shall have, if no less will serve your turn.

Christians be thankfull for every little you receive, but look for much: be thankfull for every little, every little received from God is much: A drop from that Fountain is worth
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the World, yet content not your selves with few drops; when, if you will the Fountain may be yours. The King of Glory loves to give like a King, and will never say, *This is too much, tis better for a King to give, than a Beggar to receive*; Since he hath given you leave, spare not to speak in large your desires, and let your Eye be as big as your Belly. God hath promised you, and therefore you may promise your selves; whatever you ask (that is good for you) you shall not ask in vain. Oh, if we had so much in our Eye when we come before the *Throne of Grace*, we should be oftner there, and yet still return with our load. Well Christians, remember this when ever you come to begg, look to receive, come not to prayer as to a dry breast that is like to yield no milk, or to an empty Cistern that will yield no water.

3. *Learn the skill to plead with God in Prayer.*

Though the Breasts be full yet they must be drawn hard ere the milk will come. Though the Lord be willing to give those that ask, yet he will have them first to prove they are in earnest. Store of Arguments he hath furnished us with, to press him withal, but he will have us use them. We must strive with God, if we will prevail, and the best striving is with his own weapons. The counsel I give you in this is, Plead hard with God, but plead with him upon his own Arguments; there are amongst many others, these four grounds on which to bottom your plea:

1. On God himself,
2. On Christ,
3. On the Promises,
4. On Experiences.

On God himself. And there are two special things from which you may plead here.

1. *His gracious Nature.* Fetch your Arguments by which you plead with God for Mercy thence, whence he originally fetched his Arguments to persuade himself to shew mercy; from his own bowels, from his gracious nature, from his natural goodness and gracious inclination to mercy, *John 3. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son.* &c. *Eph. 1. 3. to vers. 10. Having predestinated us to the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ unto himself, (according to the good pleasure of his Will) to the praise of the glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. (according to the riches of his Grace) wherein he hath (abounded) towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his Will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed of himself.* Here we have heaped up in a few words the Riches of Mercy which God hath bestowed on his People. Christ his beloved, Redemption through Christ, and the forgiveness of our sins, the adoption of Children, acceptance in his sight, the Revelation of the Mystery of his Will, or the discovering or making known these glorious mercies to us. But whence is all this, who is it, or what was it, that persuaded the Lord to this abundant kindness? Why, all this arose from himself, *He purposed it in himself.* He consulted no other Argument, but what he found in his own heart: it was from his love, the good pleasure of his Will, his Grace, the Riches of his Grace, wherein he hath abounded towards us.

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How shall I rise thee up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee up Israel? I cannot do it: I will not do it: I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not destroy Ephraim. But why wilt thou be angry, Lord, why wilt thou destroy Ephraim? Oh, sayes the Lord, Mine heart is turned within me; my heart sayes, Spare him, my Bowels say, Destroy him not. I am God, and not Man. I love him, and my love is the love of a God. I have compassion on him, and my compassion is the pity of a God: I will bear with him, I am a God of Patience: Love is my nature; Pity, and Mercy, and Compassion are my nature: I cannot destroy Ephraim, but I must deny mine own Nature, Love, and Pity, and Mercy, and Goodness are essential to God: He can as soon cease to be God as to be Gracious, and this is the Fountain of all our Mercy; Hence Christ sprung, hence the Gospel came, and all the Unsearchable Riches of Mercy, prepared for poor, lost, and undone creatures.

When you come to pray, fetch your Arguments hence: Plead with the Lord upon his own nature, his Natural Love, Grace and Goodness. Thus we finde the Apostle Peter praying for the Christians to whom he wrote, 1 Pet. 5. 10. [The God of all Grace] make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. Plead with the Lord in your Prayers, as the Psalmist pleades with himself in his Affliction, Psalm 77. 9, &c. Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever, hath God forgotten to be Gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender Mercies? Is his Mercy clean gone? Hath (God) forgotten

be gracious? That men should be merciful, that men should forget themselves, and their Friends in their low estate, is no such wonder. But hath God, who is all Grace, all Mercy, all Pity, hath God forgotten? Doth Mercy cease to be merciful, Grace cease to be gracious, do Compassions cease to be pitiful? Hath God not only forgotten his servant, but forgotten himself? Remember thy self, Lord, thine own Heart, thine own Soul, and according to it, remember me.

2. His glorious Name. The Lords Nature is to be gracious, and according to his Nature such is his Name, Exod. 34. 6. The Lords the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. This is an Argument which the Lord puts into the mouth of his People, telling them, Ezek. 36. 21, 22. I had pity for my Holy Name; this I do, not for your sakes, but for my Holy Names sake. And upon this we find them frequently pleading with him, Psal. 31. 3. For thy Names sake lead me, and guide me. Jer. 14. 21. Do not abhor me, for thy Names sake, do not disgrace the Throne of thy Glory, remember, break not thy Covenant with us. Go you and do likewise.

3. On Christ. And there are four things from which you may plead with God upon this account.

1. The Lords giving of Christ to you as your Lord and your Saviour. Upon which gift you may call him your own.

2. The Purchase of Christ, who hath bought from the hands of the Father, all that you stand

in need of: He hath bought your *Life*, 1 Cor. 6. 2. He hath bought you a *Heaven*, hath purchased an *Inheritance* and *Possession* for you, 1 Pet. 1. 4.

3 *The Interest that Christ hath in the Father*, being the Son of God, the Son of his Love, the Servant of God, in whom his soul delights, *Isa. 42. 1. Behold my servant whom I have chosen, mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth*; whose Name is so precious, and powerful with the Father, that it will carry any suit, obtain any request, *Joh. 15. 23. Whatsoever you ask, the Father in my Name, he will give it you.*

4 *The Interest that you have in Christ*. As he is precious to his Father, so you are precious to him; as the Father can deny him nothing, so he can deny his nothing, *John 14. 13. Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my Name, I will do it.* He gives you Commission to put his Name upon all your requests, and whatsoever prayer comes up with his Name upon it, he will procure it an answer.

Now when you are praying for any mercy, especially for any Soul-mercies, make use of all these arguments: Lord, Hast thou given Christ unto me, and wilt thou not with him give me all things I stand in need of? Hast thou given me the Fountain, and wilt thou deny me the Stream? When I beg pardon of sin, when I beg power against sin, when I beg Holiness, &c. Is not all this granted me, in thy gift of Christ to me? Is Christ mine, and is not his blood mine, to procure my pardon? his Spirit mine, to subdue mine iniquities? Are these mine, and wilt thou deny them to me? *John 1. 12. And to as many as will, he will give power to become the Sons of God.*

shall withhold them from me? Oh, shall this
 guilt trouble me, while I fight in me, this shall
 rule over me, when by giving me in hand what
 whereof thou hast already given me a grant, all
 this would be removed from me? Look upon
 Christ, Lord; Thou hast said to me, *Look upon
 Jesus* and give thy servant leave to say the same
 to thee, *Look thou upon Jesus*, and give out to
 me, what thou hast given me, in giving of him
 to me. Look upon the purchase of Christ; Do I
 want any thing, or desire any thing, but what my
 Lord hath bought and paid for, and thou hast ac-
 cepted of the price? Look upon the Name of
 Christ, which thou mayest behold written up-
 on every prayer I make. Though thou mayest
 say, for thy own sake thou shalt have nothing, nor
 a drop, nor a crumb, yet wilt thou say, nor for
 his Name sake neither? Is not that Name still
 a mighty Name, a precious Name before the
 Lord? &c. By these hints you may learn, how
 to plead with God from any other arguments,
 drawn from his promises, your experience,
 &c.

Quest. But of what use is this our pleading with
 God? and in what stead doth it stand us, in order
 to our prevailing with him?

Ans. 1. It is not of use to change the purpose
 of God, to prevail with him to do that for us,
 which before he resolved not to do; but to
 bring forth his purposes into performance. We
 may say concerning the purposes of God, what
 himself says concerning the accomplishing of
 his Promise, Ezek. 36. 37. *It will I be might-
 y, by the House of Israel, to do this for them.* Such

praying fetched out those mercies which were in the heart of God, and puts them into our hand.

2. By pleading with God for audience, we plead our selves into credence; or the more firm belief the Lord accepts and will answer. And if by all these Arguments, we can plead our selves into a stronger faith, our faith will certainly bring us down a fuller answer.

Quest. 2. These Arguments the Saints may use in Prayer: But is there no plea for poor *natural men*, that are yet in their sins, to make use of? What may they say themselves, when they come before the Lord? Have you never a word to put in their mouths? They have more need of Arguments than any; What shall they say?

Ans. 1. I shall premise, That its the duty of meer natural men to pray; For, 1. Prayer is a part of Gods Natural Worship. If there were no positive Law requiring it, yet the Law of Nature enjoynes it, and no man is exempted from the Obligation of the Law of Nature. 2. Otherwise it were none of their sin to neglect and restrain Prayer; where no Law is, there is no Transgression. Now we finde in Scripture, that neglect of Prayer is reckoned up amongst wicked mens sins, *Psal. 14. 3. 4.* They are altogether become filthy, &c. they call not upon God. Sin, though it doth disable, yet it doth not disoblige to Duty.

Obect. That which is usually objected against this is, *God haireth not sinners; The sacrifices of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord:* Now, no man is bound to offer up to God an abominable thing; better offer up nothing; than an abomination.

Sol.

Sol. In answer to this, consider, There are two sorts of sinners, *Resolved Sinners*, and *Returning Sinners*; and accordingly there are two sorts of Prayers made by Sinners, 1. *Dissembling prayers*, mocking and lying Prayers, *Hos. 11. 12. Ephraim compasseth me about with lyes*; lying Sacrifices, lying Devotions; makes as if he had a minde to know me, and serve me, when it is not in his heart; and such prayers are made use of, either as a vail to hide and cover their wickedness, and to make them appear to men to be righteous, or else as an *Engine or Device*, to quiet and pacifie their consciences in a course of sin. They make confessing of sin, to serve instead of forsaking of sin; praying, to serve instead of repenting; their prayers help them to sin the more freely; They think they may go out with any thing, if when they have done inquiry, they do but pray for forgiveness; Such prayers are an abomination to God, and a desolation to sinners. *Bring me no more vain Oblations; Incense is an abomination to me*. Sinners, not onely your wickedness, but your very prayers will undo you. If you make them a shelter for sin, your very prayers will be turned into sin.

2. *Returning Prayers*. When a Sinner, being struck with a sense of his sin, and of his necessity of changing his way, and of his utter inability to turne of himself, under the fears and troubles of his heart, goes to God, and cries out, Lord, what shall I do? I see I am in an evil case, my soul is running on in sin, and they curse and wrath I behold running on upon me; Lord, save me; Lord, help me; Lord, pardon, Lord convert

me, break me off from my sins; break me off from my sinful companions; I cannot get loose, my heart is too hard, my lusts are too strong, my Temptations are too many for me to overcome of my self; Lord help me, turn me and I shall be turned, pluck my foot out of the snare that I be not utterly destroyed: forgive mine iniquity, make me a clean heart, make me thy childe, make me thy servant, that I may never again yield up my self a servant to sin; Such a prayer as this, if it be hearty and in earnest; if there be no promise of audience, yet at least there is an *half* promise: *Who can tell?* Or, it may be the Lord may hear. Though it cannot be properly said, the Lord doth accept, neither can any man say, he will reject it as an abominable thing: This being premised.

2. I answer to the question, That sinners, if they have but an heart to it, have also a price in their hand; God hath put arguments into their mouths also, to plead with him for mercy.

1. *The grace of God, or his gracious Nature;* his readiness to shew mercy; this even strangers may lay hold upon. *Benhadad's* encouragement to beg his life of the King of *Israel*, may be the sinners plea in the begging of his. *We have heard that the Kings of Israel are merciful Kings;* Go Sinner to the Lord, and speak thus in thy heart; Lord I have heard that the King of *Glorious* is a merciful King; Thy name is the Lord, merciful and gracious, and thy Nature is according to thy Name; It is thy Nature to pity, and in thy heart there is plenteous compassion; Oh, I

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am a miserable creature, a poor, undone, helpless wretch; do for me according to thy Nature; do for me according to thy Name; will the God of mercy send away such a wretch that comes for mercy; will the God of Grace send me away without Grace? The God of Mercy hear me, the God of Grace grant me to find grace in his eyes.

2. Gods Call, or gracious Invitation, Isa. 55.
Ho, (every one) that thirst, come to the Waters, and he that hath no Money; come ye, buy and eat: buy Wine, and Milk, without Money and without Price. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the Earth. Come unto me all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Rise sinner, he calleth thee: Go to the Lord, and when thou goest, tell him, Lord, thou hast bid me come, and behold here I am; I come Lord at thy Word, I come for a little Water, I come for thy Wine and thy Milk, I have brought no price in my hand, but thou hast bid me come, and buy without Money and without Price. Though I have no grace, yet behold at thy word I come for Grace, though I have no Christ, yet I come for Christ, though I cannot call thee Father, yet being called, I come to thee as Fatherless; *Woe to thee the Fatherless shall finde mercy.* And is it only those that want the Fathers of their Flesh? Is it not also those that want the Father of Spirits? Shall earthly Orphans find pity, and onely Spiritual Orphans be left Orphans? If I am not thy child, may I not be made thy Child? Hast thou not a childs Blessing left yet to bestow upon me? Thou hast bid me come, come for a Blessing.

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blame me, even me also, O Lord. Wherefore hast thou sent for me? Shall I be sent away as I came? I come at thy word, do not say again, be gone, be gone out of my sight; I cannot go at thy Word, I will not go; for, *Whither shall I go from thee? Thou hast the Words of Eternal life.* Since thou wilt have me speak; Lord answer; Though I dare not say, *Be just to me a Saint,* yet I do say, I will say, I must say, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner.*

3. *Christ.* And there are two things in Christ, upon which sinners may plead with God.

1. *His Sufficiency.* There is enough in Christ, in his obedience and death, to save the worst of sinners; to save the whole World of Sinners. There is a fulnesse in Christ, Col. 1. 19, *in pleased the Father, that in him should all fulnesse dwell.* There is a fulnesse of *Merit* to obtain pardon, to make reconciliation for whoever comes; a fulnesse of the Spirit to Sanctifie, and cleanse them from their sins. He's able to save unto the uttermost, all those that come unto God by him. From this, Sinners may reason thus with the Lord, O Lord, I do not come to beg that of thee, that cannot be had; Thou hast enough by thee; Look upon Jesus that sits at thy right hand, is there not Righteousnesse enough in him, to answer for all my unrighteousnesse? Are there not riches enough in him, to supply my poverty? Oh, shall I die for want of a pardon, when there is such blood continually befo're thee, pleading for pardon! Oh, shall I lie down in my own vomit, and wallow in the mire of my filthy lusts, when there is such a Fountain by thee, that's still open for

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for sin and for uncleanness: Oh sprinkle me with
this blood. O wash me in this Fountain. Hear
Lord, send me not away without an Answer, when
hast it by thee.

2. *His Office*: which is to bring sinners to God, to
make reconciliation for sinners, to make intercession
for Transgressors, Isa. 53. Psal. 68. 18. Thou hast re-
ceived gifts for men, yea even for the rebellious also.
What a strange and mighty Plea is here for poor sin-
ners! Oh, it is true Lord, I am a Transgressor, and
have been from the Womb: I have played the Tray-
tor, and been a Rebel against thee all my dayes: But
is there none in Heaven that will intercede for a
Transgressor? Hath the Lord Jesus received no gift
for this poor Rebel, that falls down before thee?
Though I am a Rebel, Lord, yet I am a returning
Rebel: Though I am a Rebel, yet let me receive a
Rebels gift, not a Rebels reward, Lord, that would
be dreadful, but some of those gifts which Christ
received for the Rebellious. Doth Christ make in-
tercession for Transgressors, and shall not he be
heard? If thou wilt not hear me who am a sinner,
yet wilt thou not hear him that speaks for sinners,
whose blood speaks, whose bowels speak, whose spi-
rit speaks? Doth he speak for sinners, and yet not for
me?

4. *Their own necessity*. Sinners are necessitous
Creatures, they have nothing of value left them.
In the fullness of their sufficiency they are in straits.
As a sinner of an hundred years is but a child, so
a sinner of thousands by the year is but a beg-
gar, poor, miserable, blind, and naked: He can
want nothing, and yet doth want every thing.

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that is good : Sinne hath stript him to the skin :
fasted him to the heart, the iron hath entred into
his Soule, it hath left him nothing but wounds, and
bruises, and putrifying sores : Is this thy case, sinner,
and hast thou nothing to say ? Spread thy wants
and necessities before the Lord, and let these speak
for thee : Learn of Beggars that come to thy door,
who if they have ever a sore or malady about them,
a blinde eye, a lame leg, a burnt hand, a broken arm,
that they will be sure to open, to move pity and
procure an Alms. Their pinching hunger, their
parching thirst, their naked backs, their cold lodg-
ing, thy door shall be sure to ring of : Never a pen-
ny in my purse, never a morsel of bread have I had
for this long time ; their necessity will both make
them to speak, and help them to speak.

Sinner, spread thy necessities before the Lord,
spread thy wants, open thy wounds and thy sores,
tell him how desperately sad thy case is, tell him
of the guilt that is upon thy head, the curse that
is on thy back, the plague that is in thy heart : God
of Bowels look hither, behold what a poor, blind,
dead, hardned, unclean, guilty creature, what a
naked, empty, helpless creature I am : Look upon
my sin and my misery, and let thine eye affect
thine heart : *One deep calls to another*, a deep of
Misery cries out to a deep of Mercy. Oh my
very sins, which cry so loud against me, speak also
for me. My misery speaks, my curses, the woe
and the wrath that lies upon me : my bones speak,
my perishing Soule speaks, and all cry in thine ears,
Help Lord, God of pity help, help and heal me,
help and save me : *Come unto me, for I am a sin-
ful*

ful man, O Lord: I dare not say as once it was said, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man. Come Lord, for I am a sinful man. Thou couldst never come where is more need; Who have need of the Physician but the sick? Come Lord; I have too often said Depart from me, but if thou wilt not say, Depart, to me, I hope I shall never again say, Depart, to thee; My misery saith come, my wants say come, my guilt and my sin say come, and my soul saith come, Come and pardon, come and convert, come and teach, come and sanctifie, come and save me; Even so come Lord Jesus.

Thus you have the sinners plea. Poor Sinner, Art thou willing to return from thy sins, fear not to go to thy God. Take thee some such words as these, and go and tell the Lord, that one of his poor Ambassadors told thee from him, that he expects thee before the Throne of Grace, and is ready if it be not thine own fault, to grant thee mercy. Go, and the Lord help thee, give thee thy hearts desire, and fulfil all thy mind, and for thy encouragement take along with thee this Scripture, *Isa. 55. 6. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

4. *Pray in Faith, James 1. 6. But let him ask in Faith.* You will here enquire; What Faith is it that is necessary to our prevailing in prayer? I answer; Not onely the Faith mentioned by the Apostle, *Heb. 11. 6. He that cometh to God must believe*

believe that God is Nor only a persuasion that he is able to perform our petitions, or that he is ready to answer those that seek him aright, nor only a persuasion concerning prayer, that this is Gods Ordinance, appointed by him as a means whereby we may obtain mercy from him: Though all this be included in it, yet this is not all. The same faith is necessary to the acceptance of our prayers, which is required to the acceptance of our persons. That faith which gives a person interest in Christ, will alone procure the acceptance of his prayers.

Now this faith puts forth in prayer a three-fold Act.

1. It presents and offers up the prayer in the Name of Christ, *Heb. 13. 15. By faith Abel offered his Sacrifice.* Faith carries our Prayers to our Mediator, the great *Advocate of Request*, for he hath to be put to them, without which they will not be regarded; yea, it puts them into his hand; it saies unto Christ, Lord Jesus, take thou this prayer; what infirmities there are in it, do thou cover; what sinnes thou findest in them, do thou hide. *Mingle thy blood with my Sacrifice*, let thine intercession ascend with my offering, and thus let it be carried before the Throne of Grace, where that it may speak for me, let thy blood speak for it.

2. It depends and relies upon God through Christ for acceptance and performance. It eyes and leans upon the Promise of God, which in Christ is *Yea and Amen*; and setting to its seal, that God is true, upon this it stayer it self.

3. It works the heart to a confidence, or a confident persuasion, that God for Christs sake will hear and answer; 1 John 5. 14. *This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* But here consider, that this confident persuasion, that God doth hear and accept us, however it argues an higher degree of Faith, and brings in much Peace and Comfort to the heart; and if it be well grounded, is a good Argument that the Lord intends to fulfil our desires; yet is it not so necessary to the acceptance of our Prayers, but that they may be heard where this is wanting. If the former Acts have been put forth; if there hath been a presenting them in the hands of our Mediator, joyned with some little staying of our hearts upon the Promise; though there be a great fear upon the spirit, that God doth not regard them, yet for all this they may not be rejected. I fear, saith a doubting Saint, *I fear the Lord will not hear me, nor regard my prayers; there is so much sin in them, so many weakneses, wandringes, distrusts, distractions, that I much doubt whether the Holy God will ever have respect to them; but such as they are, there I leave them, in the hands of my Advocate; I leave mine Offering on the Altar; as poor as it is, it is the best I have; and though I much question, whether it will be accepted, yet there I leave it, waiting what answer the Lord will give. I doubt not, but such a Prayer will be heard, and my ground is this, as it is in the justification or acceptance of our persons, so it is in the acceptance of our duties;*

That

...our persons, will doubt-
less in his prayers, and that weakness or un-
varying, which will not hinder the one, will neither
hinder the other. Now it is universally granted,
that our persons may be justified, even when we are
strongly perswaded of the contrary; and I know no
reason why the like must not be granted concerning
our prayers.

—I note this the rather, for the support and com-
fort of many of the poor weakling servants of
Christ, or such as are in a troubled or deserted e-
state, who, after they have sign'd out their broken
prayers, because their own misgiving hearts return
them a *negative answer*, conclude that God doth
so too: my prayers are lost, the Lord doth not re-
gard them; Why, how can you tell God doth not
regard them? How can I tell, why, I cannot be-
lieve; the Lord will hear none but the Prayers
of Faith, and I cannot believe; I cannot be per-
swaded that God doth hear. But by what hath
been said you may perceive your mistake; you can-
not be perswaded that God hears you, therefore
you do not believe? Why, you may even then be-
lieve when you want this perswasion. Have you
offered up your Prayers in the Name of Christ?
Have you committed them to his hand, to present
them to his Father, and leaving them with him,
and adventuring them upon his Interest, can you
now but wait what answer the Lord will give? This
is that Faith, which will secure your Prayers from
being lost.

—Having thus in brief shewed you what it is to
pray in Faith, what remains, but that you practice
accordingly, study the Attributes of God, his
Power,

Power, Goodness, Mercy and Truth: Study Christ,
his Office, Interest, Sufficiency, and Faithfulness;
Study the Promises, and the Stability of them; let
your faith see its seal to all this, that God is good,
merciful, mighty, and true: that Christ will be
faithful in his Office, that his Name is mighty with
the Father, that the Promises of God are in him,
Yea and Amen. Strengthen your selves here, and
so go before the Lord: let God be in your heart,
Christ be in your hand, the Promise in your eye,
when ever there is a Prayer in your mouth. Let
your Prayer be so presented, your dependance be
so settled, and your confidence, as much as may be,
so raised; as before you have been directed; or
whether you can attain to this confidence or no,
yet do not fail of such dependance, and then see,
what a rich return your prayers will sooner or later
bring down upon you.

But he that will pray without thus believing,
let not that man think to receive any thing of
the Lord; and if he doth get nothing, let him
not lay the blame on Prayer, as if this were an
empty useless thing, but on his unbelief. The
answer, which God gives to Prayer is alwayes this,
Be it unto thee according to thy Faith: And in this
is included, *Be it unto thee according to thy un-*
belief.

This is the first means or help to a godly life,
Prayer.

THe second special Duty I shall direct you in,
is holy Meditation. And touching this, my
purpose is not to insist upon the general nature of

it, but only to give you some directions for your
putting it in practice.

The directions which I shall give, shall be such
as concern,

1 The matter of it.

2 The Method.

Concerning the former, I shall reduce the chief
matters to be ordinarily meditated on to seven heads;
which, as I shall afterwards advise may save an
Head for a day, and so in every week you may go o-
ver the whole.

I. Head concerning God.

Begin with him who is the *beginning of all things*,
in whom we have our being; in whose nature,
as well as his will, is the very foundation of Religi-
on. In the spiritual nature of God, is the reason
of our spiritual worship, his wisdom is the reason
of our submission to him, his power of our depen-
dence on him, his holiness of our conformity to
him, his justice of our fear, his goodness of our
love, his truth of our trust, his grace of our pray-
er, his glory of our praises.

Now there are two things especially (that I may
contract all into as narrow a room as possible) which
you may pitch your thoughts, and exercise your me-
ditations upon concerning God: Namely his

Dreadfulness:

Goodness:

Pinth

Direct. 1. In order to the bringing you to a due apprehension, and sense of the dreadful-ness of God; set before your eyes, what the Scriptures speak of the Majesty, Glory, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Holiness, Severity, and Righteousness of God. The Scriptures speak of the Name of God, as a fearful Name, Deut. 28. 58. *That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name, [the Lord thy God.]* And this dreadful-ness of God, is set forth,

1 By the greatness of his power, *Jer. 5. 22. Fear ye not me, saith the Lord, Will ye not tremble at my presence?* Luk. 12. 5.

2 By the immensity of his Nature, *Psal. 139. 7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

3 By the Glory of his Holiness, *Exod. 15. 11. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, who art glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders.*

4 By his Justice and Severity, *Hebrews 10. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. Heb. 12. 29. For our God is a consuming Fire.*

Direct. 2. That you may understand, and be duly affected with the goodness of God, consider what the Scripture speaks concerning his All-sufficiency, loving Kindness, Mercie, Faithfulness, Patience, &c. *Gen. 15. 1. Fear not Abraham, I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward, Psal. 36. 7, 8, 9. Thy mercie, O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness reacheth unto the Clouds. How excellent is thy loving Kindness, O God, therefore the Children of Men put their trust in thee. They shall be abundantly satisfied*

with thy Father; for with thee is the Fountain of Life, in thy Light, we shall see Light. Psal. 10. 5. For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is Life. Psal. 73. 26. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Psal. 91. 4. He shall cover thee with his feathers; and under his wings shalt thou trust; his Truth shall be thy Shield and Buckler. Psal. 34. 11. The Lord God is a Sun and a Shield. These Scriptures set forth the Lord, as a sufficient portion, wherein his people may be happy, and a sure refuge, wherein they may be safe. He is a Fountain of Light, Life, Joy, Rest, Peace, Everlasting blessedness, and Everlasting safety. He is the inheritance of the Saints, wherein they shall be satisfied; and their defence, wherein they shall be safe for ever.

Direct. 3. Ask thy heart these Questions.

Quest. 1. Is not this God worthy to be feared, believed in, and chosen for my portion and trust?

Some chuse riches for their portion, some pleasures, some put their trust in worldly friends; but will it not be well with me, if I can bring my heart to chuse, and can obtain the Lord to be my friend, my refuge and my portion?

Quest. 2. Is it not good for me to draw nigh unto God?

To get acquaintance and intimacie with God, to dwell in his Presence, and to live in the light of his Countenance; is there any life so full of true pleasure, and satisfying delight, as to enjoy and behold the Face of God in Righteousness?

Quest. 3. Is the Lord mine?

Is he reconciled to me, is his Love and Mercy made
sure to me? Some are confident the Lord is there,
but they are mistaken. Am not I mistaken? Is the
Lord mine indeed? My God and my Portion, and
my Friend indeed? If he be not, then,

Quest. 4. How may I obtain the Lord to be mine?

What pains should I refuse? What costs
should I count too hard? what price too great
to lay out for such an inheritance? Oh, how hap-
pily were I provided for, what a sufficiency had I
laid up for me, for my body, for my soul, for this
life, for everlasting; were the Lord once sure to
me? What shall I do to obtain him? if he be mine,
then,

Quest. 5. What shall I render to the Lord?

Oh the height, and depth, and length, and
breadth of the Love and Goodness of God to my
Soul, that he should bestow himself on such a worm.
'Tis much that he should give me a being in his
sight; that he should give me bread, or cloaths;
that he should feed me with the crumbs that fall
from his Table. 'Tis a wonder he should not feed
me with Aches, with Gall and Wormwood, with
Fire and Brimstone, that he hath not clothed me
with flames, with fury and vengeance. 'Tis a won-
der he should give any of his good Creatures to
comfort me, his Earth to be mine inheritance;
and my portion; but that he should give himself
to me, that ever a poor Creature should be so pro-
vided for, as to feed upon his God, to live upon
his God, to possess his God for a portion; Oh,
come unto me, all ye that fear the Lord, come
unto

unto me, and I will tell you what he hath done for
my Soul. He that is mighty hath done for me great things,
and he is able to do more. Oh, that I could love thee
more! Oh, that I could please thee, and praise thee,
and honour thee, and rejoyce, and triumph, and make
my boast of my God, and speak good of thy Name
while I have any being. The Lord is my portion, the
lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, and I have a
goodly heritage.

II. Head concerning Sin,

Direct. 1. EXercise your thoughts on the evil na-
ture of sin, and consider what the Scri-
ptures speak, concerning.

1. The Malignity that is in Sin.

2. The Guilt of Sin.

1. Concerning the malignity which is in sin, calling
it by the name of plague, leprosie, gangrene, poison,
death, hell, enmity, treachery, rebellion, filthiness, rot-
tiness, vomit, &c. All which are Scripture expres-
sions, which also tell us, that it hath made us in
Gods account, fowls, beasts, dogs, swine, serpents, vipers,
devils, &c. What a Monster is sin, that must have so
many, and such names, to express the malignitie
that is in it?

2. Concerning the guilt of sin, Rom. 3. 19. All the
World is become guilty before God, Mat. 7. 22. Guilt hath
two things in it.

First, A merit of everlasting wrath. Every
sinner

Sinner is worthy to die, worthy to be damned.

Secondly, An Obligation, or binding over to wrath, Act. 8. 23. *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and the band of iniquity.* Sinners are bound under a curse, bound over to eternal vengeance.

Direct. 2. Consider your own particular sinners, both, the special prevailing sins of your Hearts; as ignorance, unbelief, stubbornness, obstinacy, pride, passion, covetousness, malice, &c. And the evils of your practice, lying, swearing, drunkenness, oppression: Reckon up as near as you can, and write down in a Roll or Catalogue, all the several wickednesses you have been guilty of, and can remember, together with your sins of Omission, neglect of Prayer, Hearing, &c. your neglect of Christ, and the Gospel, &c.

Direct. 3. Ask thy heart these Questions,

Quest. 1. Am I not a sinner?

Quest. 2. Is all this which the Scriptures speak of sin, and sinners in general, true of me.

Am I by my very nature, such a serpent, such a viper, such a dog, such a beast in the sight of God? Is there all this enmity, and treachery, and rebellion, rooted in my nature? Am I this guilty creature, worthy to die? Am I in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity? If this be my case, oh, how can I lift up my face in the presence of God, without shame, and blushing, and self-loathing, and self-abhorrence?

Quest. 3. Is my filth and guilt done away?

This was once my condition, is it not still? Is the Enmity slain, is my corruption subdued,

Is my conscience purged, my soul washed? are my sins pardoned, is my guilt removed? If not, then,

Quest. 4. What if this corruption should never be purged, this guilt never be removed?

What if I should die in this case? If all this sin and this guilt, should stand and stare me in the face, when I come to look death in the face? What if I should appear in this woful plight before the Judgment Seat? May I not fear it may be so? My sin hath been so long growing, and rooting in my heart; I have stood it out so long against the Gospel, I have had so many warnings, so many convictions, and yet mine iniquitie remains unpurged, that I have reason to fear that it may never be purged. And, Oh, what if it should not?

Quest. 5. What must I do to be saved from my sins.

I see I am in an evil and woful case, but is there no Balm in Gilead, is there no Physitian there, that can heal such a desperate disease? Is there no ransome to be found, that may redeem such a captive? Is there no blood shed, that may cleanse me, even me from all my unrighteousnesse? Is not Christ exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to this very purpose, that he might give Repentance and Forgivenessse of Sinnes? Wherefore is the Gospel preached to me? Doth not Christ therein call to me, and bid me come to him and be saved? Is such an opportunity to be slighted? Is Redemption from such a state, worth the making after? May I obtain Redemption by Christ, whether I seek it or not? whether

whether I repent or not? Must I not believe to be damned, repent or perish? Is it a time for me to delay, or linger in a matter of such importance? Awaken, O my Soul, put away thy sloth, lay aside thy excuses, and bethink thy self what thou wilt do. The Lord calls thee this day, calls thee to return and repent, that thine iniquities may be blotted out; bethink thy self what answer thou wilt return. Wilt thou hearken, or not?

III. Head concerning Christ.

Direct. 1. **F**irst, Consider what the Scriptures speak;

1. Concerning the Excellencie of his Person, John 1. 14. *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth:* Heb. 1. 3. *Who being the brightness of his Glory, and the expresse Image of his Person,*

2. Concerning the Glorie of the Mystery of Christ Crucified, Isa. 53, throughout; *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of Sorrow, and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not: Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God. But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep, have gone astray, and have turned every*

on to this way, and God hath laid on him the iniquities of all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, Col. 1. 27. To whom God will make known what is the riches of the Glory of this Mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of Glory, Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. Who being in the Form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the forme of a Servant, and was made in the likenesse of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

The Gospel is a Mystery full of wonders.

1. There is a wonder of Righteousnesse and Severitie; That God should not spare, but punish Sin, though upon his own Son.

2. A Wonder of wisdom; That God should bring Light out of Darknesse, Life out of Death; that God should bring about the Rising of the World by the Fall of the Lord; the Riches of the Word, by the Povertie of their Lord; the Fulnesse of the Saints, by the emptinesse of the King of Saints.

3. A Wonder of Mercy; That God should harden his Heart against the Crye of his Son, and open his Bowels to the cry of Sinners.

4. A Wonder of Love; Love in the Father, in giving his Son; Love in the Son, in giving himself, his blood, his life, his Soul, a Ransom for sin; and all this, for Worms, Traytors, Enemies.

Direct.

Direct. 2. Ask thy heart these Questions:

Quest. 1. *Oh, what monster is sin!*

What an Hell, what a bottomless pit is it, of malignity, and wickednesse, that none but God can expiate or purge it away; that God cannot do it, but by taking flesh; that God manifested in the flesh could not purge away sin but by suffering; that no suffering would serve but Death; that no death could serve but such a cruel and cursed death! Oh what a Monster is Sin, that must have such blood, the blood of God to take it away!

Quest. 2. *What strange Love is the Love of Christ?*

1. Strange in regard of the fruit and benefit of it: All that Holinesse and Beauty that my Spirit is cloathed with, all that peace and joy that possesse my heart, all my glorious hopes and expectations for hereafter, all that difference that is betwixt my state and the state of *Cain*, *Judas*, and the whole reprobate World; this is the Love of Christ. Where had I now been, had it not been for the Love of Christ?

2. Strange Love in regard of the fervency and ardency of it; and that not onely to the whole generation of the Elect, but to my Soul in particular. To expresse this, ask this one Question farther, What if Christ had done and suffered all this for me alone? What if there had been but one Sinner in the World, and I had been that Sinner, and Christ should have come down from Heaven, cloathed himself with flesh, giving himself to death, given such a glorious Gospel, sent forth such a multitude of Ambassadors, to preach to, to convert, and save

Love this one Soul, this my Soul, this had been strange love. Such is the love of Christ to every Elect person, that if there had been but one Sinner, Christ would have done and suffered all this for one sinner, rather than he should have perished.

Quest. 3. *Is Christ mine?*

Have I a share in the Gospel? is my name written in the Lambs Book? *All are not Israel*, though Christ died for all, yet all are not made alive by him. There are many from whom the Gospel is hid, there are many that have rejected the Gospel, that have put from them the Word of Life. Whilst there are such multitudes that are lost and perish for ever, is my Soul sound, sound in Christ? Hath he that hath died for me drawn me to himself? Hath he that hath given me a liberty to lay hold on him, given me a heart to lay hold on him? Hath he given me his Spirit in my heart, to sanctifie and cleanse me from my sins? If I have not the Spirit of Christ in me, I am none of his. *Unless I wash thee thou hast no part with me.* If he be not mine, then,

Quest. 4. *What may I doe to get Christ to be mine?*

May I have him without seeking him? Can I live by Christ without coming to Christ, believing, repenting and following of Christ? is this ignorance, this idleness, is this earthly, this Carnal course I take; is this loose and vain life I live; is this the way to get an interest in Christ? if Christ be mine, then,

Quest. 5. *How may I walk worthy of Christ?*

Is it not by being made conformable to him? Confor?

Conformed to his image, by being holy, humble, and meek; Conformed to him in his obedience, cheerfully and readily doing the Will of God? Conformed to him in his sufferings, by being content to be brought down and laid low, and made vile for his Name; Conformed to his Resurrection and Ascension, that this poor Soul which hath descended with Christ, may also ascend with him? Ascend in holy desires and affections, ascend in holy praises and acknowledgements, confessing to him, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, for thou hast redeemed my Life from Death, and Crowned me with loving Kindness and tender Mercies.*

IV. Head, concerning the Vanitie and miserie of a worldlie life.

BY a Worldly life, understand any course or way of life, which is short of a godly life. That which the Apostle calls, *Ephes. 2. 2. The course of this World:* Such a life, the main business, care, and delight whereof lies in the managing our Worldly affairs and interests, in buying, selling, working, trading to get together this worlds good. The main comfort whereof stands in the enjoying these Earthly things, when as for Souls, and the things of another World, little or no care is taken about them, and a little pleasure taken in them.

Diritt.

Direct. 1. Consider what the Scripture speaks concerning the vanity and misery of such a life. **Psalm 10. 6.** Surely man walketh in a vain form; he is disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and turneth away who shall gather them. **Matth. 16. 26.** For what is man profited, if he should gain the whole World, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? **Jam. 5. 1, 2, 3.** Gate up ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you: Your Riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat you as it were fire, ye have heaped up treasures together for the last dayes. **Luke 12. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.** And he spake a parable unto them concerning a certain rich man, whose ground brought forth very plenteously, and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, this I will do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits: and I will say to my Soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat drink, and be merry. But God said to him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee then whose shall those things be that thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

Direct. 2. Ask thy heart,

Quest. 1. Is not my life a worldly life?

What have I done for hereafter? What have I laid up for the World to come? Have I been trading for Heaven, have I been trading in faith, repentance, prayer, have I been sowing in righteousness

careless and merry, following of Belial and
purity? What labour and pains have I taken in
seeking Knowledge, Grace, an interest in Christ,
reconciliation with God, &c. that it might be
well with my soule hereafter? My body is cared
for, I have enough laid up for that, my Wife and
Children are all cared for, I have made sufficient
provision for them, but is not my poor soul uncared
for.

Quest. 2. *How long will this life and the comforts
of it last.*

My soul is immortal, and must never die. I
must have a being some where or other to all
Eternity. Is the happiness which I have chosen
and pursued an everlasting happiness? Are my
Money, and my Corn, and my Land, everlast-
ing.

Quest. 3. *What shall become of me when this life
and the comforts of it fail?*

Will this golden or silver key open the gate of
Heaven to me? Will my money buy me an inhe-
ritance in the Land of Promise? will my thristi-
ness and good husbandry for this world plead for
me before my Judge, or excuse my neglect of my
soul? Will the memory of my plenty, or my
pleasure, or my ease, in which I have lived here, be
a comfort and refreshing to my soul hereafter? Can
all my carnal friends and companions, with whom
I have lived so merrily, and spent so many a jolly
hour, can their good word stand me in stead then?
Will God own me, or Christ plead for me then?
Is not this he whom I have despised, and refused
to hearken to, and will he not then say to me, Go
to the Gods whom thou hast chosen, Go to thy Money,
and

and thy pleasures, and thy companions, let them
leave thee if they can. Oh what shall I do, and
where shall I dwell for ever if I continue in this vain
course?

Quest. 4. *Shall I now set upon a better course?*

Shall I in earnest? wilt thou, oh my Soul, wilt
thou now in earnest become an adventurer for an-
other World? A Traveller to the holy City, which
is above? Wilt thou cast in thy lot with Christ and
the everlasting Gospel? Wilt thou at last fall to la-
bour for the true Riches, and enduring substance?
Wilt thou provide the bags that wax not old, a
treasure in Heaven that faileth not? Shall I take
this course, or shall I continue as I am?

V. Head concerning the excellency,
blessednesse, and necessity of a Godly
Life.

Direct. 1. Consider what the scriptures speak con-
cerning,

The { Entrance
Nature
Blessedness
Necessity } of a godly
Life.

1. Concerning the Entrance of a godly Life,
or the way by which we come to be godly; that is
expressed, by being *born of God*, John 3. by being
converted to God, Acts 3. 19. *Repent therefore and
be converted*; by having *Christ formed upon our
hearts*, Gal. 4. 19 *My little children, of whom I
travel*

travel in birth again, until Christ be formed in us. A new birth must go before a new life, conversion before an holy conversation.

2. Concerning the Nature of a Godly Life; which the Scripture sets forth in these and such like expressions: *Walking with God, walking in the fear of God, and the Comforts of the Holy Ghost, living by Faith, having our Conversation in Heaven, and as it becometh the Gospel, being holy, harmless, the Son of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked Generation, shining forth as lights in the world, denying all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, living righteously, soberly, and godly: keeping our selves unsullied from the world: walking circumspectly, keeping a good Conscience, &c.* By all which expressions, and many such like, it appears, that there is more required to a true godly life than is ordinarily imagined.

3. Of the Blessedness of a Godly life, Psal. 1. 1, 2. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the way of sinners, but his delight is in the Law of the Lord, 1. 3. 4. The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself, hath taken him out from the rest of the world, to be his own peculiar possession, his Favourite, his Servant, his Child, on whom he intends to bestow himself for an Inheritance.*

Direct. 2. Ask thy heart,

Quest. 1. *Am I converted to God?*

Is there any supernatural change wrought upon me? Is this change a thorough change? Conversion is not a slight, but a great and marvellous change. Am I become a new Creature? Is there a new light set up in me, a new life begotten in my heart?

Am

Am I become a more calm, quiet, another constitution, temper, disposition, than formerly I was? Am I born from above, and is my heart now set upon things above?

Quest. 2. *Is my life a godly life?*

Do I think in my Conscience, that the course of life which I live, is that which the Scriptures mean by walking with God; living by Faith; having the conversation in Heaven, keeping a good Conscience, walking circumspectly, &c. Can this fleshly, idle, easie, careless, life which I live, be possibly accounted a truly godly life?

Quest. 3. *Is a godly life necessary?*

Can I be saved without it? Do not the Scriptures entail everlasting blessedness in the life to come, on godliness of life here?

Quest. 4. *Can I be too godly?*

Can I have too much likeness to God? too much care of my ways? too much fear of sin? Can I be too sure that God is mine? Can I have too much peace, too much joy, and inward comfort? I may be too rich to be happy, too great to be good, too merry to be wise, but I cannot be too gracious, too humble, too watchful, too circumspect! Let me ask of dying persons, whether they have taken more care than needs? whether they have more grace than needs? Let me ask of those who when they come at last to be weighed in the ballance, are found wanting, whether there were any fear of making too sure, or being too busie, and diligent, and painful about the work of their Souls?

Quest. 5. *Shall I now, without any longer delay, set upon a godly Life?*

Is it not necessary to take up this holy conflict? When shall I begin? Shall I this day resolve upon it? Can I begin too soon? Can I look after God too soon? I may defer too long, till it be too late, and what if I should? What if I should stay so long in *Sodom*, till it be too late to escape to *Zion*? What if I should dwell in the Tabernacles of Wickedness, till it be too late to return into the way of Righteousness? Awake, O my Soul, awake from thy worldliness, and sensuality; away from thy carelessness. To day, to day, if thou wilt hearken voice, give thy self to God, give thy self up to the power of his Spirit, and government of his Word. Hitherto I have been a fool, hitherto I have been a Servant of Sin and the World. Oh, that from henceforth I might yield my self to God, as one made alive from the dead.

VI. Head concerning Death and Judgment.

Direct. 1. Think on what the Scriptures speak concerning,

The $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Dread} \\ \text{of Death} \end{array} \right\}$ of Death.

1. Concerning the Dread of Death, Rev. 6. 8. It is set forth by a *pale Horse*, an horse for strength, there is no resistance of it; an horse for swiftness, an horse for its office, and use, to carry away; a *pale Horse* for its gallantry; Death hath

hath a grim and ghastly countenance, that thrusts
terror into all hearts, and palenes into all faces
Job 18. 14. It is called the King of terrors, the
Black Prince, the Prince of Clouds and Darknes,
as some render it : Darknes hath its terror in it,
and the King of Terrors, that notes, the highest
and most terrible of Terrors.

The terror of death arises,

1 From its Office or Errand, upon which it
comes, which is,

1 To arrest the guilty sinners, and commit them
to custody, to be reserved to Judgment.

2 To revenge the quarrel of an angry God. By
sin death entered : Death came into the world, not
only as the *Per disseque peccatis*, one of its Retinue
or Attendants, but as the *vindex peccati*. By sin,
man provoked God; by death, God takes vengeance
on man.

3 To cut off, and carry us away to our place,
Death is the door betwixt the two worlds; the
parting point, where sinners take their leave for
ever of their pomps, and their pleasures, of their
Houses and Lands, and their Friends, so as never to
return to them again.

It is dreadful to be carried away from our ha-
bitations and acquaintance, we know not whi-
ther; sad was the death of him, who dying said,
*Ancius tuius, dubius morior, & nunc quo vado ne-
scio*; I have lived in care, I die in doubt, but whi-
ther I am going, I cannot tell : but to them
that understand whither death is carrying them,
(as it is the case of self-condemned sinners) into
the place of darkness and eternal misery; This

is that makes Death indeed the King of Ter-
rors.

2 From its Armour: Death is furnished,

1 With a Dart; this notes the stroke of
Death, whereby it dissolves this Tabernacle, divides
betwixt Soul and Body. This dart of Death is
such, against which there is no Armour of Proof
can secure us; from which no quality or condition
can exempt us; neither King nor Captive, neither
Rich nor Poor, neither evil Men nor good Men,
can escape this Dart: whomsoever Death strikes,
it strikes sure, and strikes home, and never fails of
doing Execution.

2 With a Sting, 1 Cor. 15. 56. *The sting of Death*
is sin. A sting doth two things, 1 It pierces, 2 It
poisons. Hence follow those rumours and inflama-
tions, and that anguish that a sting puts men to.

But what is the sting of Death? 'Tis Sin. This
is the Poyson upon the Dart of Death, that makes
it so full of torment; an evil heart, an evil consci-
ence, an evil life, this is it that makes Death so ter-
rible. A guilty Conscience often stings a sinner, in
his life, in his health, in the midst of all his prospe-
rity; but when Death and a guilty Conscience
strike in together, then it stings with a witness.

2 Concerning the Death of Death, or its des-
truction. This Enemy is to be destroyed, *Hos.*
13. 14. Yes, it is in part destroyed already,
1 Tim. 1. 10. Christ, by dying and rising again,
hath overcome Death; and this not for him-
self, but for his Members, on whose behalf

he hath disarmed Death and taken away his sting, so that though it strike them, yet it cannot sting them. Death as an hornet hath stung our Lord, and in him hath lost his sting. Hereupon the Apostle, in the persons of all Believers, triumphs over Death. 1 Cor. 15. 55. 57. *O Death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God who hath given us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Christians, that through Christ have conquered sin, by the same Jesus have conquered Death; so that now it is possible for thee to live above the fear of Death: some natural fears there may be, some shrinkings back of the flesh, but the great fear is over, the bitterness of Death is past.

2. Consider what the Scripture speaks concerning Judgement; Consider these two Scriptures. 2 Cor. 5. 10. *For we must all appear before the Judgement-Seat of Christ,* Mat. 25. 34. to the end. *Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, before the foundation of the world, &c.*

Direct. 2. Ask thy heart these questions.

Quest. 1. Must I not dye?

Quest. 2. Whither will my death carry me?

In which of the two Regions of the other world, is my death like to land me? Either in the Region of Everlasting Light, or in the Region of Everlasting Darkness? To which of those two Regions am I now travelling? By this I may guess, whither my death will transport me.

Quest. 3. What a strange change will Death make upon me?

What

What a change of my Judgment, and Opinion?
With what a different eye shall I look on all things
then, from what I do now? Shall I look on God,
on Christ, on Holiness, on peace of Conscience,
with such a slighting and undervaluing eye; or on
the Glory, and Pleasures, and Lusts of the World,
with such an admiring and doting eye, when Death
comes, as now I do? A godly Life, a good Consci-
ence, the promises and priviledges, and hopes of the
Gospel, I can now look on as follies, and fancies,
and trifles; shall I count them so then? Sin, and
guilt, I make a matter of nothing now; shall I
have the same thoughts at death? If I could speak
with any soul, that's gotten one step beyond the
Grave, and should ask him, What do you think of
sin, and the pleasures of sin now? What an answer
might I then expect?

What a strange change will Death make upon
my person? When, if I be a Saint, this poor
Soul, that hath had its habitation in *Meshech*,
hath been imprisoned in a sinful body, mourn-
ing, and sighing, and labouring under the bur-
then of sinnes, and lusts, and temptations, and
doubts, and fears, and scoffs, and scornes, shall
in an instant be set at liberty from all this, and
be lodged in the armes and bosome of the Lord of
Glory. Or, if I be a sinner, when I shall be
taken from all my glory and greatnesse, from all
my delights and dalliances; from all my hopes
and confidence, and be thrown down like *Luci-
fer*, Son of the Morning, from all my bright-
nesse, into the blacknesse of darknesse for ever.
When, though I lie down in hopes and confi-
dence,

dence, that I shall have rest, yet within a minute after Death hath closed mine eyes, I shall awaken in everlasting flames: How will my undone soul then cry out, Oh, where am I? Is this my place? Must this be my dwelling for ever? Are all my hopes and confidences come to this? Is all my mirth and my pleasures come to this? Wo, wo, wo to me miserable Wretch; how am I deceived, whether am I fallen?

Quest. 4. *How dreadful will this day of Death be to sinners, when it is come?*

— Whilst its only preached, or thought of at a distance, it affects but little; but when the day of darkness is come, and they shall feel their house of Clay falling; when their last Sine is running, their last breath drawing, their miserable souls lanching into the depth of Eternity; when a few minutes will lodge them in the place of darkness, and everlasting torments; What a black day will it appear then?

Quest. 5. *On which hand am I like to stand in the Judgment?*

Am I like to stand on the right hand, or on the left? Among the Sheep, or among the Goats? On which hand do I stand now? Have I my Conversation among the Goats, my fellowship with the Goats here, and can I expect to have my sentence with the Sheep?

Quest. 6. *What may I do to get above the fear of death, and Judgment?*

How blessed is the state of those Christians, that are gotten beyond this fear? They may well be content to bear the Cross; they may well be patient in tribulation; they need fear none of

of those things they shall suffer here, their great fear is over; Death is swallowed up in victory. But how may I, upon good grounds, be out of this fear? How I be fit to die, & to stand in the Judgement, and not may thence be afraid? Oh, if I could get the Sting of Death out, this sin crucified, this guilt removed; Oh, if I could get such a Life, over which Death can have no power; if I could get Christ to be my Life, my Judge, to be my Friend, then welcome Death, and the Grave; welcome the Great Day; then that black hour will become the blessed hour; then that dark and gloomy day, at the approach wherof, this sinful world will call to the Mountains to cover them, and the Rocks to fall on them, would be to me a glorious day; wherein I should lift up my head with joy, because my Redemption is so nigh. So let me live, that I may be fit to die, and then let my Lord come, whenever he pleases: Yea, then I may say, *Where are the wheels of his Chariot so long a coming? Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like so a Roe on the Mountains of Spices.*

VII. Head concerning Eternitie, or the World to Come.

THere is a two-fold Eternity: Of Blessednesse, and of Misery: The one the portion of the Saints: the other, the reward of all the ungodly of the Earth.

Direct. 1. Consider what the Scriptures speak,

1. Concerning the *Eternity of Blessednesse*; Heb. 4. 8. *There remaineth therefore a Rest to the People of God*; Psal. 16. ult. *My right hand there are pleasures for evermore*; 2 Cor. 4. 17. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*. Whence note, that the state of the Godly in another World, is, 1. A State of Rest. 2. A State of Joy. 3. A State of Glory. 4. That the Joy of this Rest is unspeakable and unconceivable; Therefore called the *Rest of God*, the *Joy of the Lord*; When a King makes a Feast, he makes a Royal Feast; When a King gives Gifts and Favours, he gives like a King. God will save like a God, reward like a God; such shall be the reward of the Righteous, that men shall say, *Verily he is God that judgeth*, Psal. 58. 11, 5. *that this Joy is Eternal*, 2 Cor. 4. 18. *The things which are not seen, are Eternal*.

2. Concerning the *Eternity of Misery*; Isa. 30. 33. *For Tophet is ordained of all. Tophet is a place lying in the Valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, where the Idolatrous Jewes burnt their Children in Sacrifice to Molock. And it is used as a Type to signifie Hell, or the place and Punishment of the Damned hereafter; Whereof this is the Description; He hath made it deep and large, the Pile thereof is Fire and much Wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it, Matth. 8. 12. But the Children of the Kingdome shall be cast into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.*
Mark

Mark 9. 44. *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

Whence note, That the torments of the ungodly in another world shall be,

1. *Intolerable.* It is the wrath of the Lord that will lie upon them; *the breath of the Lord shall kindle and feed their flames.* As the Lord *will/ave like a God*, so he will *punish like a God.* The Wisdom, Power, Severity, and Justice of God shall be exercised in compounding such a deadly Draught, such exquisite Torments, that the ungodly World shall feel, that he is a God with whom they have to do.

2. *Eternal.* That shall never have an end. This makes Hell to be Hell indeed, a Pit without bottom, a night that hath no day following it, a Grave from which there is no Resurrection. Oh the height and depth, and length, and breadth of this one word *Eternity.*

Direct. 2. Ask thy Heart,

Quest. 1. *Who shall ascend into the Holy hill?*

Shall the unclean enter in thither? Or the Ignorant, or unbelievers, or adulterers, or drunkards? doth not the Scriptures tell me who they are? *Psalms 15.* throughout, *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh Righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart; he that back-biteth not with his Tongue, nor doth evil to his Neighbour, in whose eyes a vile person is condemned, &c. Matth. 5. 3. to the 12.* *The poor in Spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the poor in heart, the peace-makers.* These are they that shall ascend into the Holy hill.

Quest

Quest. 2. *Who shall descend into the Lake?*
Rev. 20. 15. *And who ever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the lake of fire.* Chap. 22. 15. *For without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Adulterers, and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.* 2 Thel. 1. 8, 9. *In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

Quest. 3. *Am I in the way to this rest of God?*

Quest. 4. *Is my Title to this rest sure?*

Is my name written in the Book of Life? am I sealed with that Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of my inheritance? have I gotten an assurance that Christ is mine and Heaven is mine? is not this assurance to be had? is there not a promise left unto me of entering into the Rest? May not this promise, by my believing and accepting, and adventuring upon it, be made sure to me? what mean I to sit down so quietly, short of this assurance? am I content to leave my earthly inheritance under such uncertainties, that I cannot tell what to call my own, I cannot tell whether I have any thing or nothing? Do I refuse any labour, cost, counsel that may secure my worldly interest? and what is it onely Heaven and everlasting glory, this is not worth the securing?

Quest. 5. *What if I should fall short of this Rest?*

If at last I should see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets, sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, and my self be thrust out? I have made

made profession of Religion; I have some good will
to the wiles of God, born some affection to the Peo-
ple of God, had some communion and fellowship with
them, had a name and good opinion amongst them,
I have gone to the House of God with them, joynd
in Prayers, Fasting, Sacraments with them, I have
attained to some probable Evidences of Grace: But
what if notwithstanding all this I should be found
at last to be short of sincerity and of true saving
Grace? I have complained often of an earthly heart,
of a slothful heart, of a carelesse heart, of a lingering
delaying heart, I have had some motions and
stirrings in me to shake my self out of this sloth,
to awaken and rouze my self out of these delayings
and triflings; I have been thinking often of taking
more care and pains; I have been wishing often for
a diligent heart; I have been hoping that it will not
be thus alwayes with me: but that one time or other I
shall attain to more life and seriousness: But what
if a fter all this complaining, and thinking, and wish-
ing, and hoping it will be better, I should still run on
thus from one day to another, from one year to ano-
ther, till I be surprized, and should be taken away
before I have gotten my heart to a thorow closing
with God in Christ?

*Quest. 6. How joyfull will my state be when that
day comes, if I may then be counted worthy to enter into
this Rest?*

*When the voice shall sound in mine ears, I will
done good and faithfull Servant, enter thou into the
joy of thy Lord. When all these filthy garments and
ragges of the Flesh shall be put off, when all
these*

These bitter tears shall be wiped away, when all the clouds of darkness, doubts, fears, sorrow, afflictions shall be blown over, when I shall be brought into the presence of the King of Saints, and see all those glorious things that have been spoken of the city of God: When mine head shall wear that Immortal Crown, and my heart shall taste and drink of those everlasting pleasures at Gods right hand: When I shall be brought into that general assembly, and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, to an innumerable company of Angels, to God the Judge of all men, to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, to the Spirits of just men made perfect; when my heart shall acknowledge, Now I know indeed whom I have believed, and see for what I have laboured: When this poor Soul, that in its travel towards *Sion* hath passed through a Wilderness, lyen among the Pots, been fed with Tears, clothed with Reproaches, clog'd with Infirmities, discouraged with fears and dismayings, shall after all this be let down in the Kingdome of God, and be lodged in the armes and bosome of the Lord of Glory, and bear a part in those everlasting praises and *Halleluahs* before the Throne of God for ever, when mine eyes shall come to see all this, and my heart to possess it, will it not be a joyful day?

Quest. 7. *Can mine heart endure to think of being put out from this blessedness for ever?*

Can I burn? Can I endure the vengeance of Eternal fire? VVill boyling Oyl, burning Brimstone, scalding Lead, a glowing Oven, a scorching Furnace, be a easie Lodging for me? Thou wilt not

not (oh my soul) be persuaded to repent, there
is too much pain in thee: Thou canst not bear a
cross, or an affliction, a scolding, or a reproach, talk
to thee of crucifying the flesh, of denying thy self,
of parting with thy fleshly lusts, thy worldly com-
panions, of entering in at the strait gate, of walk-
ing strictly and precisely according to the Gospel,
thou cryest out, Oh these are hard sayings who
can bear them? But how wilt thou do to dwell
with the devouring fire? How wilt thou dwell with
everlasting burnings? Whatsoever it seems to thee
now, think what Hell will be to thee when the day
comes that thou must descend into it: Now thou
lookest at it as a scare-crow, or a bug-bear, thou
canst drink away, or laugh away the fear of it; but
what will it be to thee, when thou feelest thy self
wrapt up in the flames of it, and not a drop of
water left to cool thy tongue? Think on Hell, oh
my soul, and then think on Christ, and consider,
if a Redeemer from such misery, be not worth
the accepting; think on Hell, and then think on
Sin, then think on thy carnal pleasures and de-
lights, and consider how they will relish with
thee, when thus salted with everlasting fire. Are
these the things, for which I dye? Are these the
price for which I sell my soul to Hell? Away, away
from me all my lusts and pleasures, away from
me my companions in sin, I confess I love you too
well, but I must not burn for you, I must not damn
my soul to please my flesh.

Touching the practice of this Duty, take these
two further Directions.

1. Every day, morning and evening; set apart
sometime for secret prayer; and when you go to
pray,

pray, do not rush immediately upon it, first be directed and take one of those Heads; meditate on what the Scriptures speak upon them, and then propose the several questions to your hearts, and when you find your hearts affected and warmed by these Meditations, then fall to prayer.

Let each mornings Meditation be ordinarily matter for your thoughts to work on, and for discourse that day, unless providence cast in, and calls you to some other profitable subject.

The matter of Meditation is purposely divided into seven Heads, to the end you may take one of the Heads for each dayes Meditation, and so in every week you may go over the whole, being the chief things of Religion: And thus continuing from day to day, from week to week, you will be both more thorowly acquainted; and more deeply affected with the things of God, and will find, through his blessing, more liveliness and enlargement in Prayer, and more comfortable success.

Only take heed of formalitie, of resting in the work done, of going on in a round of Duty without a due regard to the end of Duty: Let this be your aim in all, to get your hearts more fixed upon, and affected with the things of the world to come, more enlarged and quickned, and more effectually carried on in that course of holy and heavenly walking, the end whereof is everlasting life.

But now, lest any should complain that this course is too tedious, and that which they cannot have time daily for; or that by reason of ignorance, or want of helps, they cannot perform it:

...their understandings, and should be able to
go through with this course, and all others at such
seasons as they are unavoidably strained for
time, nay, instead of the larger, take this shorter
course.

When ever thou settest upon the Duty of
prayer, sit down, and ask thy heart these *Qu-
estions*.

*Quest. 1. What am I? am I a Believer or an
unbeliever, converted or unconverted? do I think
in my Conscience I belong to God: or do I not fear I am
yet the child of the Devil?*

*Quest. 2. What do I? what are my ways, are
they such as please the Lord, and tend to the Salva-
tion of my Soul, or are they the ways of death and
damnation?*

*Quest. 3. Before whose presence do I now
stand?*

Is it not before the Lord, the Almighty God,
who is the rewarder of them that diligently seek
him, and the avenger of those that slight or rebel
against him?

*Quest. 4. What am I come before the Lord a-
bout.*

Is it not to plead with him for my soul, to beg
my life at his hands, to beg my pardon, and re-
demption from everlasting death, and to obtain
grace for the salvation of my Soul?

This short and plain course would be some ad-
vantage, thou knowest those that are able, and can
redeem so much, would commend the con-
stant use of these *Directions*.

...ed no. The

The third Special Duty I shall direct you in
Self-examination:

It is of great use to the carrying us on in an holy
course to know our state. For,

By the knowledge of our state we shall the
better know our work, when we know what we
are, we shall the better know what we have to do.
If the question be, *What must I do to be saved?*
The answer of that will depend upon another ques-
tion, *How far forth am I come already?* Am I con-
verted or unconverted, in a state of sin, or in
a state of grace? Let that question be first
answered, and the answer of the other will be
easier.

2. By the knowledge of this, that we are in a
good estate, we shall have much encouragement
to hasten on. Assurance will quicken and encour-
age us on in the way of holiness. Those that af-
firm, that the *Doctrine of assurance* is a licentious
Doctrine, and serves for nothing, but to maintain
men in a loose, lazy, and idle life, understand not
what they say, nor whereof they affirm. 'Tis all
one as if they affirmed, That the more assurance
any person hath of the love of God, the less he
will love God, or that the more he loves God, the
less care he will take to serve or please him. Those
that know no other motive to Duty, but fear, may
preach such Doctrine: but those that have found
the quickning and confirming power of love, must
lay down both their reason and sense too, before
they can believe it.

The way to know our selves is, to search and examine our selves. 1 Cor. 13. 4. *Examine your selves, prove your selves, know ye not your own selves?*

Now to help you in this duty of Self-examination, I shall give you these two Directions :

1. When you set to examine your selves by any marks or signs : In the first place, examine your Marks that you would try your selves by. If you would prove your selves, whether you have true grace or no, by any mark that's given, examine that Mark by the Scriptures, whether it be a certain and infallible sign of grace, so that you may be bold to conclude, that if you can find this Mark in you, you are undoubtedly in the state of grace. That's a proper mark of true grace, which, whosoever hath it, hath grace; and whosoever hath it not, hath not grace. If you take that for a mark of true grace, which is common to Saints and Sinners, you may take your selves to have grace, when you have none. And if you take a mark to try your selves by, which is proper to Saints, but is not common to all Saints, you may take your selves to have no grace, when you have. The former mistake may lose you your peace; this may lose you your souls; therefore Christians, be wary here; try your marks, before you try your selves by them.

2. For the matter of your enquiry, let it be,

1. *Whether you are gotten into the way of life, or not; or, whether you are translated out of a state of sin and death, into a state of grace and salvation?* And if so, then,

2. *Whether you be in a thriving or flourishing state; or in a languishing or decayed state?*

To help you in the former trial, I might only send you back to those directions formerly given, concerning your closure with Christ, whence it will not be difficult to gather some certain marks to try your selves by; but I shall add two or three more, wherein, let it not be offensive to any, that I follow that light which I have received from the worthy labours of that faithful Servant of Christ, Mr. Baxter; whence I confess my self to have, through mercy, grown into the fuller acquaintance with mine own heart, and which I shall therefore the rather make use of, for the help and benefit of others.

1. Mark.

1. Whereforever there is true Grace, there is an hearty willingness to part with every sin.

The first work of the sanctifying Spirit upon the soul, is, the discovering of sin, making it appear to be an enemy; and the first saving work is, the dividing betwixt sin and the soul, making an utter breach betwixt them. The Spirit of God makes us first to look on sin as an enemy, and then to deal with it as an enemy; to hate it, to fear it, to be impatient at the presence of it. *Rom. 7. 24. Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* When the good Spirit enters into the heart, from that day forward, the Soul looks on sin, as *Satan* look'd on *David*, when the evil spirit fell upon him; It's said, he eyed *David* from that time forward, he looked on him with an evil eye, with an envious eye: Oh! that I were once well rid of this *David*; Oh! (saith a Convert) that I were

once well rid of this Lust. It's now become to the Soul, as the Daughters of *Heb* were to *Rebecca*, *Gen. 26. 35. A grief of mind to it, a weariness to it.* I am weary of my life, because of these daughters of *Heb*.

When there is this breach made betwixt sin and the Soul, it's grace that hath made it; when sin hath lost the will, it hath lost the man; when Christ hath gotten the will, he hath gained the man. The will, is the heart; give me thy heart, is the same, as be willing to be mine; the will is the strong hold of the soul; this is it that holds out last against God; when this is won, all is won. Sin may have lost the understanding, and lost the conscience; these may plead for God, and for holiness, and may cry out against sin, *Away with it, away with it; Crucifie it, crucifie it;* there is Death and Hell in the bowels of it, away with it. But as long as sin hath the will for it, it still hath the man. Reason saith, *I ought to turn;* Conscience saith, *I must turn,* but yet nothing follows; but when the heart sayes, *I will turn,* then the work is done: Reason saith, these Idols ought not to stand; Conscience saith, these lusts must be subdued; these my sinful pleasures, these my sinful wayes, these my sinful companions, must be left; but when the will sayes to them, *Get you hence,* there's a work of Grace begun.

But now this willingness to part with, or turn from sin, that it may infallibly prove grace to be in us, must be,

1. Universal. A willingness to be rid of all sin. The enmity against sin, that's wrought by grace,

is against the whole kind, against all sin, Root and Branch, Body and Members. A true *Israelite*, would not have one *Canaanite* left in the Land, would have the whole generation rooted out, Psal. 139. *I hate every false way.* Psal. 139. *Search me, O Lord and see if there be (any) wickedness in me.*

2. Habitual. It must not be onely for the time that the heart is set against sin, when it is under some terrour or trouble, but there must be an abiding willingness. *Pharaoh*, when the Thunder, and the Hail, and the Fire, and the Frogs, and the Flies, were upon him, for the time was willing to let *Israel* go, but presently after he meant no such thing: 'Tis not what thou art in a fit, in a fright, or sudden passion, in sickness, or under the apprehensions of death, that will give thee any certain Light, by which thou mayest judge of thy state, but what thou art in the standing and abiding disposition and bent of thy soul: A Godly man is never unwilling (when he is himself) to be rid of every sin.

3. Prevalent. The willingness must be greater than the unwillingness. A gracious heart is more willing to be rid of sin, than to continue in sin. He had much rather, if it were put to his choice, live without all sin, than to be allowed to live in any sin. Whatever the pleadings and reasonings of his flesh are, for an indulgence in any particular sins, whatever the advantages of yielding to the flesh herein might be, whatever dammages or prejudices might follow upon his parting with them, yet he had much rather,

1. whatever

whatever comes of it, be freed from them all. If the Lord should come to such a soul, and give him as large a grant as he did to *Solomon*, *Ask what I shall give thee*, ask what I shall do for thee, write down what thou wilt, and thou shalt have it; that is that which he would have, *Lord take away mine iniquities*. 'Tis not the lives of mine enemies, or a revenge upon them, that I desire; 'tis not freedom from trouble, or affliction, that I desire; make me a clean heart, O Lord, purge me from my sins, let my lusts die, my corruptions die, and then though mine enemies live, and their malice lives, and my troubles live, yet if my sins be once dead, I have my desire.

And this willingness will discover it self to be prevailing by bringing forth,

1. Resolution.

2. Resistance against sin.

1. Where a man is truly willing to be rid of sin, there will be resolution against it; he will not only be patient and content to give God leave to crucify all his beloved lusts, and darling corruptions, and give the world leave to hew and strike home at the root of them, without hiding them, or warding off the blow, or wishing they might be spared to him, but stands stedfastly on Gods side, and taking part with him against sin, resolves to use all his means for the conquering and overcoming of them.

2. This resolution will bring forth resistance. A heart that's weary of sin, will fall to striving against sin, Gal. 5. 17. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, for these two are contrary the one to the other.* Contraries are

naturally expulsive each of other. Such a pair as a *Jacob* and an *Eſau*, ſuch *Twins*, as an *Iſaac*, and an *Iſhmael*, cannot lie quietly together in the ſame womb; no, nor live quietly together in the ſame houſe, but there will be a mutual proſecuting and perſecuting each of other; fire and water may as well agree in the ſame veſſel, as grace and ſin in the ſame heart. A gracious heart will be reſtraining, curbing, and withſtanding it, in all its workings. It's a mere vanity, for men to talk of being willing to be rid of ſin, when they let it live, and work, and rule, and run in its courſe, without ever laying the hand to the bridle to reſtrain it.

Let me add one word more; if you ſtrive againſt ſin, and your ſtriving be attended with ſucceſs; if you have gotten any degree of victory, the evidence will be much more full and clear.

This now is the firſt Mark, by which you may try your ſelves, whether there be the truth of grace in you, or not.

He that is willing to be freed from all ſin, habitually willing, prevailingly willing; he that's more willing to be freed from ſin, than to be allowed to live in ſin, and hereupon is reſolved to uſe all God's means for the conquering of it; and accordingly ſtrives, prays, watches, and wreſtles againſt it, eſpecially if he finds his luſts begin to fall before him, undoubtably there is grace in that man's heart. As *Haman's Wife* ſaid to her Husband, *If this Mordecai be of the ſeed of the Jews*, before whom thou haſt begun to fall, thou ſhalt not prevail againſt him; I ſhall

be bold to say to such a person, without any *ifs* or *ands*, this *Mordcau* is of the seed of the Jews, this grace, before which thy lusts have begun to fall, is the *Seed of God*, and therefore thy sins shall never totally prevail against it ; but shall finally fall and be destroyed by it.

2. Mark.

2. *Wheresoever there is true grace, there is a preferring in the esteem and choice of a strict and sincere godly life, above any other life in the world.*

A godly man loves all godliness, and he loves it above all. *Psal. 19. 9, 10. The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever, the Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous a'together ; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than the honey and the honey-comb ; that is, than all the world : more to be desired are they ; that is, the fear of the Lord, and the Judgements of God deserve more respect from men, are of more value, more worth the desiring and looking after, than gold or honey ; Here are all the advantages of a worldly life put together in two words ; The profits of it, and the pleasures of it ; and the fear of the Lord preferred before them all. (Than Gold) Gold is all things ; Gold, much gold hath greatness following it : Gold hath glory, all the glory of the world attending it : Lands, and livings, and honours, and friends, and all things that a carnal heart can desire, are hidden in the golden mines. Honey notes all the sweetness, pleasures, and delights of a worldly life. Now, saith the*

Psalmist: put all this together, all the revenues, and incomes of a worldly life, together with all it's pleasures and delights, and the fear of the Lord will weigh them down all. Though this foolish world run a madding after money, and pleasure, spend their dayes, waste their lives, prostitute their consciences, throw away their souls upon these things, yet one dram of godliness, one day spent in the fear of the Lord, is better than all this: thus the *Psalmist* gives us his Judgment.

Let us next consider what his Choice is: *Psal.* 4. 6. *There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us: thou hast put gladness in mine heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.* *Psal.* 17. 14. 15. *The men of the world have their portion in this life, their bellies thou fillest with thy hid treasure; they are full of Children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes: but as for me, I will behold thy face in Righteousness.* The men of this world; as they seek, so they have their portion in this life, they have a glorious and a gallant time of it here, great portions, great possessions, great prosperity; their bellies full of pleasure, enough to spend upon themselves, and to leave to their Children after them; this they have, and much good may it do them: Let me but behold the face of God in Righteousness, walk before the Lord in my integrity, keep a good conscience, live in the obedience of his Will, and in the light of his Countenance, and then let them take the corn, and wine.

mine, and what else they can get: let the Lord be mine, and I shall never envy them their portion: *Psal. 84. 10. I had rather be a door-keeper in the House of the Lord, than to dwell in the Temples of Wickedness.* The meanest condition of those that live in the presence and favour of God, I more desire, and would rather have, than the highest condition of others. Let me be a door-keeper among the Saints, rather than a dweller with the wicked. So *Moses, Heb. 11. 25. Choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the Reproaches of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt. Psal. 119. 30, 111. I have chosen the way of Truth, &c. Thy testimonies have I taken as mine heritage for ever.* Where observe,

1. How he came into the way of Truth: that is, not by chance, but by choice; I have chosen the way of truth. There are some that Rumble in upon Religion, who being cast into such places or societies, where Godliness is in fashion and credit, joyn in to do as others do, and yet their hearts have never chosen Religion: but I have chosen the way of truth, saith the *Psalmist.*

2. What it is he chose of Religion; *The way of Truth*, the Testimonies or Precepts of the Lord. Some there are that have chosen the wages of Righteousness, but not the way of Righteousness, the Promises, but not the Precepts of the Lord; as much as you will of the *sweet*, but none of the *sweat* of Religion: But I (saith he) have chosen the way of Truth.

3. What

3. What account he hath of what he hath chosen ; He accounts it as his heritage. There be some that choose Religion, but it is only for a covering, or a cloak to hid their wickedness, making the same use of it, which a Whore doth of her paint, to hide the deformity that is under. Others take up Religion for their last Refuge ; something they must have, to which they may have recourse at last ; but they will not have much to do with it, nor take much pleasure in it at present : But he chooses it, not only as his *Refuge*, but as his *Riches*, not only to be the ground of his *future hopes*, but to be the matter of his *present joy*.

From all these Scriptures, observe,

1. That a godly mans settled Judgment is, That a godly life is the best and happiest life.

2. That a godly mans choice is according to his Judgment. He esteems the fear of the Lord above Gold, and he chooses it before gold ; He is better pleased, and doth rather take up with the meanest, and most afflicted condition, in a way of holiness, than with the most plentiful, and prosperous estate, in a way of sin ; he prefers the poverty of Christ, before the riches of the World.

3. Godly men and worldly men are distinguished, and may be known the one from the other, by their choice they make for themselves. He that makes a worldly choice, is a worldly man ; and he is a godly man that makes a godly choice. Take Godliness with all its inconveniencies, with all its difficulties and distresses, when it is most under a cloud of reproach and

con-

contempt, and take a worldly life with all its advantages, preferments, pleasures, in its greatest sun-shine of outward prosperity and glory: And he is not a godly man, he is not of the *Psalmist's* spirit, that is not able to say, *Give me this poor despised, godly life, before the most flourishing life of worldlings.*

3. Mark.

3. Whoſoever hath true Grace, doth actually live a godly life.

The tree is best known by its fruits, the sincerity of our purposes, by our performances. If you think you have chosen a godly life, and yet do not live a godly life, it is a sign you are mistaken, and have not sincerely chosen it. *1 John 3. 7, 10. He that doth righteousness is righteous; he that doth not righteousness is not of God.*

There is a two-fold Righteousness, and there is a two-fold *doing* Righteousness.

First, There is a two-fold Righteousness. Righteousness is taken,

1. In a strict sense for *Justice*, properly so called, which stands in the due observation of that Rule, *Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.*

2. In a larger sense for *Holiness*, or an universal rectitude of all our actions. To live according to our Rule, the whole Word of God, is, to live righteously. In this Scripture it is taken in this latter and larger sense: He who carries himself holily and unblameably, both in the things pertaining to God, and also in the things pertaining to men, he doth righteousness.

Secondly,

Secondly, There is a two-fold *doing* Righteousness.

1. In a Legal sense, which stands in an *exact* keeping and fulfilling the Law. And thus there is none righteous, no not one; because thus, there is none that doth righteousness.

2. In an Evangelical sense: *A walking uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel*: A sincere endeavour to observe all things which the Lord hath commanded us.

For the further clearing whereof, I must make use of a two-fold distinction.

1. I must distinguish betwixt a *single good action*, and a *series of good actions*. It is not one, or a few single good actions, but a continued course of holy actions, that denominates us holy. As there is no man so holy, who doth not sometimes fall into sin; so there are few men so wicked, who do not sometimes fall in with that which is good, and as every sin which a godly man, through infirmity, falls into, doth not presently denominate him *ungodly*; so neither will a few good actions done by another man prove him *godly*. 'Tis what the *course and tenor* of the life, that must be diligently observed. A godly man makes godliness the *business* of his Life. Religion is a Christians trade, and you may well call it his trade upon a double account.

1. It is his *living and livelihood*; men live upon their trades, a mans trade is his maintenance, his bread, and his cloaths, and his lodging, all comes in from his trade: Godliness is a Christians whole living, he prays, and he lives

lives by praying; he believes, and he lives by faith; he loves, and he lives by love; all the supports, succours, comforts of this life, come in this way. A Christians livelyhood is all laid up in Christ; and in the exercises of godliness, he gets it down into his Soul: Take away from a Christian his Religion, take away Faith and Prayer, and Hope and Love, and the Labours and Exercises of them, and you leave him a poor man indeed; take away his house, and his means, and yet he lives; take away his bread, and yet he lives; but take Faith, and Hope, and Prayer, &c. from him, and he dies.

2. *Godliness is the business of his life*: A mans trade is his *constant work*; not the exercise of now and then a day, or an hour, upon occasion, but it is his *every dayes work*. Godliness, as it is a Christians daily bread, so it is his daily work. Judge not thy self by what thou art in some few Holy dayes of thy life, when perhaps by falling into affliction, or into some good society, or being present at some good Duty, or Ordinance, thou seemest for a fit, to be another man than thou art at other times. Judge not thy self to be what thou art, *when thou art not thy self*, when thou art but in a fit: but see what the trade and ordinary way of thy life is; he that in his ordinary course does righteousness, he is righteous.

3. I must distinguish betwixt a Christians actions, and his care about his actions: the holy actions of some that are really Godly, especially of young beginners, may be but few, in comparison, but their care is more continued:

ed; what the Apostle saith of unmarried persons, is true of all Christians; every soul that is married to the Lord, careth how to please his Husband; though I do not say, that all carelessness doth conclude we have no grace; yet this I say, it is more than careless Christians can tell, whether they have any grace or no, though such may have grace, yet they can have no assurance. He that finds that the great care of his life is how to please the Lord, is of God.

Try your selves by this Mark also: do not enquire only about your affections, what your desires are, or what your joyes are, what your comforts are, or what your peace is, but what your paths are: when all comes to all, this is the surest mark, *He that doth Righteousness is Righteous, he that doth not Righteousness, is not of God.*

Put all these together, and whosoever there is of you that is thus willing to part with sin, doth thus esteem, and hath thus chosen a godly life above all other lives; and hath this attested by his usual care in his ordinary course to please God, Oh! be thankful, and blest God for ever: there is that work of Grace begun in thy soul, that doth undoubtedly prove thee to be of God, and in the State of Salvation.

Having faithfully tryed your selves by these certain and infallible marks, and proved yourselves to be in the state of Grace, (for I would advise you, to bring your trial to a clear judgement) then proceed in the next place to examine;

2. *Whether you be in a thriving and flourishing state.*

whether you have made a comfortable progress in business? or whether you be at a stand, or behind hand?

To help you in this, I shall only give you these two or three short directions:

1. *Compare your selves with your selves*; your present state with your former state: Look back and consider what you were, or have been at any time since you first believed, and then see what ground you have gotten or lost.

2. *Compare your state with your time that you have had, and your means, and opportunities, and the several talents that you have received.* See if your stature in grace be answerable to your standing, if you are of seven, or ten, or twenty years standing in the Vineyard of the Lord, consider, if you also be of so many years growth; See if your reckonings you have to bring in be answerable to your receipts; If you have been of long standing, and yet are but little of stature; if your knowledge be as little, your faith as weak, your love as cold, your peace, your comforts as uncertain, your corruptions as many and mighty as they have been many years since, much more if the waters of grace and peace run lower now than they did heretofore, you may conclude your selves to be but in a poor case, and indeed to be out of case.

3. *Compare your selves with the best of other Christians, to whom you have been equal in time, and other circumstances.* See if you have kept pace with the best of your time. If you see your selves behind your company, much more if you see divers that have set forth after you, to have

out-run you, and gotten much before you : if you see Christians of less time, of less parts, that have had fewer helps, greater hinderances, to have gotten the start of you : if those that have been but a few hours in the field are returning home laden with the sheaves they have gotten, and you that have been there all the day, have gotten only a few poor handfuls, you will have no reason to think it over-well with you.

Christians, you, whose case this is, *a barren and unthriving case* : Oh! labour to see it, and to lament it, and to acknowledge it ; *I confess it is even thus with me*, I confess this is my case ; if it be, bewail it, mourn over your neglects, and bemoan your poverty : If you had had a great trade in the world, and a good stock, and good marketers, and shouldst trade and trade from time to time and never prosper, but be poor and low, when you see others of the same trade to flourish and grow rich, how near would it go to your hearts ? Christianity is a good trade, Grace is a good stock, the Ordinances of God, under which you have lived, have been good Markets, many that have set up long since you did, are grown rich, rich in grace, rich in comfort, rich in good Fruits, and yet that you should still be so poor, and behind hand, this is lamentable : And oh ! lament over it, and consider, that it is time for you now at length to look better to yourselves.

That you may get into a better case, examine a little farther, what it is that hath hindered your thriving, and kept you back : See

of these following hindrances, which I shall name in a word to you: some one or more of them, it's very likely, have kept you thus back hitherto.

1. A slight and overly performance of Holy Duties: Duties have a great influence upon the state of our Hearts and Lives. Look what Christians are in their secret duties, you shall find them much after the same rate in their ordinary course. If you see a Professor that's dead and barren, sad and careless, and unfavoury in his life, follow him into his Cloister, and you shall (ten to one) find him as slight, and dead, and heedless in his Prayers, and those that shift over their duties, will but shuffle in their conversations. Try & this be not your case. Or,

2. Unprofitable Converse with Carnal Friends. The Communion of Saints should be improved to the edification of Saints. Christians should find other matters to talk of, than of their Corn and Cattel, the Weather or News. What? have you not a God, nor a Christ, nor a Soul to be minding each other of? Never a word of your Country whither you are Travelling? We should come together, to get light from each others Candle, to get warmth from each others fire: If you squander away such opportunities, no wonder if you remain dark and cold: Examine if you be not faulty here. Or,

3. Unnecessary Converse with Carnal Friends. Brothy and Unfavoury Company leaves a chill and a damp, and a vanity upon our Spirits. It is not for nothing that Christ requires his Disciples,

3. *Remember that you are as the Father and Mother, Son and Daughter, much more such carnal friends as are at a greater distance; if we cannot forget these, they will quickly help us to forget our God and our selves.*

4. *For Religion doth not teach us to be uncharitable or uncivil; it requires that we give to all their dues, Friendship to whom Friendship; courtesy to whom courtesy, and duty to whom duty belongs; but that it teacheth, that we do not unnecessarily converse with those, whose society we may avoid, nor unwarily with those whom we may not avoid. With whomsoever you dwell, let your delight be in the Saints! If God call you among others, let them be your fear, rather than your familiars; and keep such a due distance, it may neither hinder you in your duties to them, nor prejudice you in your duty to God; examine how it hath been with you upon this account.*

5. *Over-burdening your selves about the affairs of this life. It may be, you find so much work to do abroad, that you see all eyes at yaldome within. It may be, the reason why your hearts are so cold, is, because you have so many friends in the life, you have so many heads to look to, that your garden is all over-run with weeds.*

6. *The remaining guilt of some unrepented sin. Israel cannot prosper whilst there is an accursed thing in the Camp. Or else,*

7. *Some uninforming lust that you live under the power of, and yet it may be, take no notice of. You have, it may be, a proud heart, or an*

an angry, fretful heart, or an envious, revengeful heart, and this may be it that makes you pine away. An unquench'd lust in the heart, is like a moth in the garment, that eats out the strength, and maims the beauty of it. Pride in the heart, is as proud flesh in a wound, whatever medicines be used, the wound remains uncured, till the proud flesh be taken off. An angry, fretful heart, is like a Wolf in the breast, whatever be applyed, it will prey upon and devour it, and the body pine away, till the fretting humour be cured. And so any other prevailing lust will have the same effect. As a man in a Consumption, that's wasted to skin and bone, whatever cordials, or restoratives he takes, his flesh will never be gotten up, his strength will never return, till the corroding Rheum be staid. If there be any prevailing lust in thy soul, especially if thou indulge to it, in vain shalt thou use many Medicines, for thou shalt not be cured, till that lust be subdued. Thou may'st pray, and fast, and complain all thy life long, of thy deadness, and barrenness, and languishing state, and yet still be pining away, whilst there is any iniquity that thy heart gives indulgence to. Search diligently, and see if this be not thy case.

7. Slothfulness. The field of the sluggard is a barren field. He that will not plough, nor sow, nor weed, nor watch, nor work in his field, is like to have but a poor crop, *Prov. 24. 30.*

8. Contentedness with thy poor, and low, and barren state. Some that are born poor, live all their days, and take up with their poor state, and never look after riches. For ought thou

knowest, thy heart might have been in much better case, if thou hadst intended riches. 'Tis the covetous Christian, that is the rich Christian. As 'tis with worldly men, the *Covetous of the earth*, these are the rich men of the earth, these are the monied men, the landed men, that have laid house to house, field to field: and it may be, if thou hadst been *spiritually covetous*, thou mightest have laid grace to grace, comfort to comfort, and have been a man of great possessions before this day: but thou hast been a narrow-hearted, poor-spirited creature, that never hadst any ambition, nor tookest up any design to grow great and rich towards God; and hereupon 'tis that thou art as thou art.

Christian, though there be none of the former causes mentioned, but may have an hand in bringing poverty upon thee, or holding thee under it: yet, it may be, this last, a *contentedness with a little gain*, is that to which thou owest most of thy pining disease. This is too common a case with Christians. We have not large hearts towards God, we are not covetous after holiness; we are too well contented to be babes in Christ, to be children in the grace and knowledge of God: where shall we find a Christian almost, that is *resolved to be rich*; to seek great things for himself, the great things of Eternity I mean, to bring forth much fruit. It is no wonder there are so many *barren sheep* in Christ's Fold, so many *barren fig-trees* in Christ's Vineyard, so many starveling souls among the Professors of Religion; when there are so few that do seriously design fruitfulness. We might have been as those sheep which

which *Salomon* mentions, to resemble the Church by, *Can. 6. 6.* Wheretof every one *search* I think; we might have gotten double to what we have done, if we had had a mind in earnest to it.

Brethren, Consider how it is with you, and if you find this to be your case, that your souls are in an unthiving state, search narrowly if some of the fore-mentioned particulars be not those that have kept you back; and when you have found out the cause of your disease, rest not till it be removed; for be ye well assured, That *that which hath hindered, will hinder, till it be taken out of the way.*

THe fourth and last Special Duty I shall direct you in, is, the *Renewing of your Covenant*: Wherein, before I give you the Directions, I shall premise,

1. That every sincere Christian is (as hath been before shewed) entred into Covenant with God.

2. That Christians are guilty of much *treachery* and *false-dealing* with God. They break Covenant daily. The Lord may take up that complaint against many of us, which he took up against *Israel*, *Psalm. 78. 36, 37.* *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and lyed unto him in their tongue; their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in the Covenant.*

There is a double falshood in the Covenant, which we may be guilty of.

1. There is a falshood in our *covring* into *Covenant*; when we do it not heartily, but feignedly; when our promises to God are nothing but words; when we mean not, nor intend any such thing as our mouth speaks; this is *lying unto God*. *They lied to him in their Tongues*. Oh! how many such liars are there to be found amongst those that are called Christians! We have all covenanted to renounce the world, and the love of it, to renounce the flesh, and the lusts of it, to renounce the Devil and his works. We have all Covenanted, to take the Lord to be our God, to cleave to him, obey and serve him only, and till our dayes. All this we have done in our Baptism, and in our profession that we have since made, to stand to our Baptismal Covenant. But have we not, many of us, lied unto the Lord? Hath there ever been any such thing in our hearts? Those that are *false in this Foundation of their Christianity*, are but *false Christians*; those that have *lied unto God in their Covenants*, are but *lying Covenanters*.

2. There is a falshood in our *keeping Covenants*; when, whatever reality there hath been in our *intention*, yet we fail in *execution*; when we do not stand to our word, nor are stedfast in our Covenant, and every part thereof. And thus every Christian is more or less guilty. Every sin we commit, is, in a degree, a breaking Covenant, a departing and going back from the Lord, and dealing treacherously with the most high. Oh! how much falshood of this kind is there to be found in every one of us, when some of our hearts are so set upon the world, and take so much

much liberty in pursuing, and so much pleasure in the enjoying of these earthly things, that the Lord is the less regarded and looked after. Is this according to our Covenant? When there is such fleshliness and sensuality, to be found amongst others, when we live such idle, ease, careless lives; when our appetites, our passions, our imagines are left so much at their liberty; when there is so much provision made for the flesh, and so little for the soul: Is this according to our Covenant? Is this all we meant, in promising to be Christians? Is this our living to God, our living to Christ? Oh! what falsehood have we been guilty of!

2. That all our breaches of Covenant, do exceedingly weaken the bond and obligation of the Covenant. The obligation of the Covenant may be said to be weakened in a double sense.

1. Really, when the eye of it is relaxed and loosened, and we cease to be so strongly bound as before; and thus no sin can weaken our Covenant-obligation; it doth not become ever the less our duty, to cleave unto God, for that we have so often departed from him, or ever the less our sin, to follow the world, for that we have followed it so long. Our sins, in this sense do rather add to the obligation, by how much the less we have paid off our debt, by so much the more there is behind; Our former neglects do oblige us to the more care for the future.

2. Sensibly. When the bond of the Covenant being so often broken, is not now accounted so *solemn* or so *sacred* as before; by how much the more it hath been broken, by so much the less

(111)
It holdeth fast upon us. It seemeth but a very light thing to persons that have so often and ordinarily broken their Faith with God, to break it over and over again; It doth not much afflict or trouble such hearts which have been accustomed to transgress, to revolt more and more. When sin can plead prescription, it grows bold: *If I were to begin again (saith the sinner) I would take more care and look better to my ways; but ever since I have been, now I have gone on so long, it will not be much worse if I go on a little longer.*

4. The *Renewing* of our Covenant, will *renew* the Obligation of it. Though there be not a *stricter*, yet there is another Tye; There is a *new* *law* added to the *old* *covenant*. Men are more afraid and ashamed to break their word as soon as it is gone forth out of their mouths. The seriousness wherewith such a sacred duty should be performed, will leave some impressions upon the heart. The very considering over our Covenant-breaches, which is necessary to our renewing of it, will awaken our hearts to more care and watchfulness.

These things being premised, I shall give you this double Direction for the performance of this Duty.

1. For the time when.

2. For the manner how.

Touching the former, there are some special times when this Duty is especially seasonable. As,

1. Upon your falls into any greater sins. *Great* *falls* make *great* *breaches*, and 'tis not safe to let them lie *unmade* up. Breaking of Covenant makes

make a breach upon Conscience, and this will prove as the breaking down the banks of the Sea, which, if they be not presently made up, there may be no stopping them.

2. In great Straights and Afflictions. We have then our hearts at the advantage, to bring them back, or to bind them the faster to the Lord, when we stand in any special need of comfort, or help from God. *Gen: 28.20, 21.* when *Jacob* fled from his Fathers house, for fear of his Brother *Esau*, he vowed, *If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, so that I come again to my Fathers house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God.* Times of *straights and difficulties* are a special season for this Duty; though it be too ordinary that those vows which we make in the dayes of our distress, are quickly forgotten in the dayes of our prosperity: *Sampsons* *Witch*, broken, as *Tow* when it toucheth the fire.

3. In case of any declinings to a careless remiss, and senseless frame of heart or life.

4. At our approaches to the Table of the Lord. These are some of the special times for the performance of this Duty.

2. For the manner how.

1. Remember your Covenant, read over, and consider distinctly the terms of it, and weigh diligently the strictness, and great solemnity of your engaging to God therein, that your hearts may be the more deeply affected herewith.

2. Remember your faults: Read over, and consider distinctly the sins you have fallen into
since

since your engaging to the Lord: together with the several aggravations of them; and repent and be humbled under them. (Isa. 50. 4.)

1. Especially consider how your hearts have stood towards the Lord in the main; whether your failings have not been such as give you occasion to suspect that you were not upright in your first engaging. Consider whether such a life as you have led since, such sins as you have been overcome by since, are consistent with sincerity.

2. Resolve upon more care, watchfulness, and faithfulness for the future. Verbal promises, though there appear some affection at the time, if they be not joined with a resolution to take more care, are like to come to nothing.

3. Have a special eye in your engaging to the Lord at your special sins, failings and neglects, that you have found your selves more inclined to, and more prominently overtaken by. I will, through the help of God, watch against every sin; but especially against covetousness, passion, or lying, &c. This is my sin, herein I am apt to be faulty, here my hardest work lies. I will watch to every Duty, but especially to temperance, or patience, or self-denial, herein I have been most wanting.

6. Lay hold on the Covenant or Promise of God, for the renewing of his Grace towards you, for the renewing of your strength, whereby you may be more enabled to perform your promises, and pay your vows. It may be your former experiences of your unfaithful hearts, have quite discouraged you. I have found this heart of mine so fickle, and so false, and so feeble, that I dare not
trust

is so far, as to engage any further for me. I have found my work so hard, my lusts so strong, my temptations so many, my strength so small, my attempts to follow God, so unsuccessful, that I am afraid I shall never come to any thing; I doubt I shall but mock God, and bring more guilt upon my self, by adventuring to promise any thing further for this sinful, infirm, and unfaithful heart. Why? though thou dar'st not trust thy heart, yet trust thy God, who hath said, *Thou wilt put his fear into thee, that thou shalt not depart from him, that he will renew thy strength, and that his grace is sufficient for thee.* Depend upon God for the renewing of thy strength, and then fear not to renew thy Vows.

7. In this strength of the Lord, go into his presence, and with sorrow in thine heart, and shame in thy face, falling down before him, humbly confess and acknowledge thy falls and failings; and then, in the like solemn manner, as thou hast been before directed, engage thy self again to the Lord in the same Covenant.

2. I shall next direct you to make right improvement of Duties.

Godliness doth not stand barely in Praying, Meditating, or Examining; there is something farther that these Duties have a respect, and must be useful to; 'Tis an *holy life*, that is the end to which our *holy Duties* are to lead, and help us on. That they may do so, take these two following Directions.

1. *Whenever you sit upon Duties, resolve to get hard for it, so enjoy such sensible Communion with God in them, that you may come off in a better*
and

and more spiritual frame of heart than you have.

The *Blowing* goes up your hearts to any duty-frame in Duty, be careful to keep it up after Duty.

Whenever you set upon Duties, resolve to put *hand* for it, to enjoy such sensible Communion with God, that you may return from them with some advantage upon your spirits. Resolve with him, *Namque a te absque te recedam*, whenever I come before the Lord, I will never go away without him.

The reason why we thrive no more by Duties, is, because we do not meet our God in them: God never meets with his Saints, but he sends them away with some marks of his Goodness upon them.

The reason why we do seldom meet with God in our Duties, is, because we do not so wisely look for his appearance. God waits for thy coming, Soul, and, if it be not thy fault, thou mayest see his face before thou departest; and, if thou see God in a Duty, thou wilt not then return without some impressions of God upon thy heart.

When *Moses* came down from the Mount, where he had seen the Lord, his face did shine, there was something of the glory of God upon his countenance. *Israel* might plainly see that *Moses* had met with God, they might see the beams of divine Glory in his face. Oh! how sad is it, that Christians should return from duty with no more of God in their faces, or upon their spirit, than for the most part they do. We come many times with

with no other Spirit from our *Bibles*, 'or our *Conscience*, than we come out of our *Shops*, or out of our *Stores*; no body would ever think we had been praying, or conversing with God, there is so little *power of God upon our hearts*, that we bring back with us.

Brethren, whenever you let down your Pitchers into the Wells of Salvation, be not coming to bring them up empty: be so conversant with God in your Duties, that you come off laden, as one Bee from the Flower, with the honey and sweetness of your duties.

And this I advise you to endeavour after, not only in your secret duties, not only in your solemn publick duties, on Sabbaths, Humiliation days, or Thanksgivings, but in your daily family duties, your Reading, Singing, Praying, yea, even in those shorter Prayers and Praises which you use before and after Meals. Whenever you draw nigh to God, look to see God, to taste of God, and to get down something of God upon your hearts. And then,

2. *Whatever you have gotten from God in Duty, what life, what warmth, what refreshing, what enlargement of heart, be careful to maintain and keep it alive afterwards.* See that your Spirits do not presently sink and cool again, after they have been thus raised and warmed. Do not satisfy your selves with this, that you have some comfortable entertainment with God, and feel some warm and lively works of your heart towards God, and some refreshings from him in Duty; but look to it, that you keep that holy fire that is there kindled, from being presently quenched again.

Yo:

You do not eat and drink for so short a time as
you may have the comfort of your food while
your meat lasts, but you eat for afterwards, for
the pains and strength which you get by eat-
ing may hold you out to the next meal. Duties
are the set-meals of the soul, wherein it so feeds
itself upon God, that in the strength of what it re-
ceives, it may afterwards walk with God more
comfortably and cheerfully. *Quia ergo mensuramus*
The Lord promises to his people, *Et dabo*
etiam vineam et vineam that reach to the *Vintage* and the
Vintage to the Seed-time. And *etiam* you to the
Harvest and *Harvest* to the *Harvest* and the
renewal of *Grapes* and *Harvest* and *Harvest* and *Harvest*. The
meaning is, Your old store shall be so much, and
last you so long as all new corn shall: you shall
not only reap enough for the time of *Harvest*,
you shall not only gather enough to serve you dur-
ing the time of the *Vintage*, but your corn shall
last from *Harvest* to *Harvest*, and your wine shall
serve you from *Vintage* to *Vintage*: your Old
store shall not be spent till New come to supply
you. Duties like the *Harvest* and *Vintage* of
our souls. Oh! what blessed lives should we live,
did we so improve and husband what we get in
one Duty, that it might last us out to another;
that the *Vintage* might reach to the *Vintage*, the
Harvest to the *Harvest*, that the life, and warmth,
and refreshing we get in one Duty, might hold us
out till the next, and so we might be carried on
in an holy, lively, heavenly frame from Duty to
Duty, as *Israel* walked on from strength to
strength, till they came and appeared before God
in *Sin*.

That

That which holds us so low and barren in Religion, is, that whatever we have obtained from the Lord in Duties and Ordinances, we presently lose it: when we have been weeping sometimes before the Lord, and wrestling with him, and pressing hard for some quickning or comforting influences of his Spirit upon our hearts, and the Lord hath heard us, and given us our desires: yet when as soon as duty is over, we go away, and forget all, and bury all that we have thus obtained, in a confused heap of worldly thoughts and businesses: we unbend, and let down our spirits, and lay aside all thoughts of God, till we come to duty again: we content our selves to live in such an estrangement from God all the rest of our time, that sin and the world have a *whole day's time to pull down what we have built*: a *whole week's time to destroy and fling away what a Sabbath day we have built*: and so at the returns of duty, we find our hearts at the same loss, in the same dullness and hardness that they were before.

In the Old Testament, though the Sacrifices were offered but *morning and evening*, yet the fire that kindled them was not to go *in night nor day*; there must be fire kept alive from the Morning-Sacrifice, to kindle the Evening-Sacrifice, and fire left from the Evening to kindle the Morning-Sacrifice: Oh! Behold, how often is it, that *though* at our Morning-Sacrifice a fire is kindled, yet we let that fire lie all day under the ashes, and take so little care to keep *blowing* at it, that it goes quite out before the Evening: and when we come to offer our Evening-Sacrifice, we have no fire to kindle it

Brethren,

Children, both the Lord visited you, and comforted you in duty: Oh! think with yourselves, what a sweet life should I live, might I be thus with me alwayes? What pity is it, that such light should ever go out? that such grace should be so short liv'd? Why? if I do not look to my self the better, this Sun-shine will last but a little while: and how will the Lord take in, if I suffer such sparks that he hath kindled, so suddenly to be quenched? How is my Soul ever like to prosper, if such precious food pass away from it as soon as it is received? *Is this a fast that I have chosen, for a man to afflict his Soul for a day?* Is this a prayer that God regards, for a man to afflict his heart for an hour? to be in the Mount with God, to be railed up to Heaven for the time, and within a few minutes after to be sunk into the dirt of the earth? What a sad change is this! How can you bear such a loss as this? When will your souls come to any thing, if you have only some few such *saecula intervalla* and all the rest of your time are covered over with clouds and darkness?

Beloved, as ever you expect to prosper in grace, or be settled in peace, be chary of maintaining your *duty in common*; do not think to make use of your prayer, comforts, to save you the labour of an after care, but to help you to be more careful and fruitful.

But how may we do to keep this Holy and lively frame?

1. Be watchful. *Nehem. 4. 9. Nevertheless we prayed, and set a watch against them night and day.* Beloved, it is with you as it was with those Jews, whatever you have gained, you have Adversaries

adversaries lying in wait to steal it away ; whatever you have built, you have adversaries lying in wait to pull down again. I have heard of some enchanted places , where what men built in the day, the Devil pull'd down at night ; and this danger you are continually in ; what's built at one prayer, the Devil labours to pull down before the next. Let your eye be much upon your hearts, observe diligently, how they hold up or sink, that if there be the least damp or decay, growing upon you, you may elude it *before it be gone too far* : 'Tis no wonder we lose all upon such a sudden, when ordinarily, as soon as ever our duties are done, away we goe, and think no more where we have been, or what we have been about ; as if we were well content to *take our leave of our duties, and our God together*. When you depart out of your Closets, leave *your hearts behind you* ; Worldlings seldom bring their hearts thither ; when they come to pray, they *leave their hearts behind them*. Let Christians never carry them thence : when you have done praying, and must abroad to your earthly affairs, *let your hearts stay behind with your God* : Let your thoughts be much upon the entertainment you have had ; see to it, that the temptations you meet with, do not so easily divert you from minding what you have been begging, or wrestling for.

2. Make present use of what you have obtained ; God gives Grace, and Strength, and Life, for use, and use will preserve it. Hath the Lord warm'd thy heart ? goe warm thy Brothers heart, and that will keep thine from cooling : Hath God spoken comfortably to thy soul ? goe

and speak of thy God, and what he hath done for thee to others. Hath God inclined, and therefore fitted thee for action, take the season; thou mayest do more for God and for thy soul in such an hour, than in many dayes beside; be doing with what thou hast received, and thou need'st not fear losing it: when we are idle, then we fall asleep and grow cold; Instruments do not rust while they are in use. We never more spend our strength, than when we spare our labour.

3. Lift up your hearts to the Lord often every hour, in some short Ejaculations. No business, no company can hinder this duty, and this will be of special advantage to you, therefore neglect it not; every sigh, or breathing of your souls Heaven-wards, will fetch down fresh influences from Heaven upon you.

4. Charge this whole course actually upon your selves every morning, and examine every evening how you have kept to it.

5. If you cannot otherwise bring, or hold your selves to this course, bind your selves to it for some time by *special vow*, till being a while inured to it, it may become at length more easie.

Being thus entered upon, and prepared for a godly life, I shall give you some directions.

1. How to carry it on; and for your help herein, take these following counsels.

1. *In your whole course, pursue, and as much as possible, eye your end, God, and your own salvation.* Consider often wherefore you live, and what it is you would have; and if this be it, that God may be honoured, and your souls saved, let this be

be pursued and prosecuted in all the parts of your life. Take not that course, do not that action, that hath not some tendency that way; and that which hath a tendency, let it be directed to that glorious end. Let every arrow be levell'd at your mark. The reason why the end is no more attained, is, because it is more intended; 'tis no wonder we shoot short, or beside our mark, when our eye is not upon it.

The eying our end, will both direct our course, and quicken and encourage us on.

Set the Lord much before your eyes, dwell upon the contemplation of his Glory, and glorious Excellencies; consider, how worthy the Lord is to be exalted, and what an honour it is to poor creatures, to be any way serviceable to his Honour; & what pity it is, that any of your time, any of your strength should be spent upon vanity, which might be so improved, to so *worthy and high an end*? Begirt with every minute of your time that is not bestowed on God.

Consider the blessedness of living for ever in the presence and enjoyment of God. Look towards the holy City, enter by faith into the Holy of Holies, set your selves before the Throne of God; view (as much as at this distance you are capable) that everlasting light, those blessed and glorious joys, those rivers of pleasure, that exceeding eternal weight of glory, which is there possessed by the Saints; And then say to your hearts, Come on soul, come on, here's that thou art praying for, here's that thou art labouring for, here's the Country, the Kingdom, the Crown that thou art fighting for, and wrestling for, and running, and suffering for.

The setting this glory before your eyes, will both quicken and sweeten your holy course, and take off your heart from any other courses. The end puts *a beauty upon the means*, and *a blackness upon all the hinderances of its attainment*. A sight of Heaven will make a holy life a beautiful life.

There are two things that make an holy life beautiful;

1. That it's the Image of an Heavenly life.

2. That it's the way to it.

All the labours, difficulties, sufferings of a godly life, are therefore pleasant and beautiful, because they are the way of the Kingdom.

And, on the other side, a sight of Heaven, will make the wayes of sin to be unpleasant, to be dark and black wayes.

There are two grounds upon which sin is odious to the Saints.

1. It's *Opposition* and unlikeness to God; it bears the Image of Hell upon it, not of Heaven.

2. It's *Interposition* betwixt them and their end.

Nothing else can ever keep them from God; There's no danger of their falling short of Everlasting blessedness, but by sin. This is the only *Gulf* that's fixed between them and Glory. And hence 'tis that the way of sin, with all its pleasures, ease and delights, is to the Saints, *a dark and dismal way*. The pleasures of sin are *black pleasures*; the gains of sin are *black gains*; the jollity, and liberty, and prosperities of sin, are all *dark and black* in their eye. These clouds, whatever brightness there seems in them, do keep the Sun from shining on them.

Oh ! what progress might you make in the way of Life, where Holiness with all its difficulties become beautiful, and Sin with all its delights become odious ! What would there then be wanting, that might encourage you on, what would there be then left to hinder you ? Why, let God and Glory be more in your eye, and then Sin will be more odious, Holiness will be more precious in your eye ; you would then neither want encouragements to lead you on, nor be incumbered with such temptations as now keep you back. Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13. *The Grace of God (which bringeth Salvation) teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, &c. Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 4. 16, 18. For the which cause we faint not, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.* Before he had declared how hard 'twas with them, troubled, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, &c. Notwithstanding, saith he, we faint not, --- while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen.

Brethren, look on the things not seen, and take from them both *direction* in your way, and *encouragement* to go in it.

1. Take Direction from Heaven ; when you are travelling, and see the place before you whither you are going, your eye will tell you your way. When you are entering upon any Course, then look up, and consider, Is this my way to God ? When you are eagerly and greedily pur-

finding the world, ask your heart; Is this my way to Heaven? Am I now working out my salvation? When you are walking in the way of carnal pleasure or liberty, then look up to the Lord, and look in upon your heart, and say, if you can, *Now, Lord, I am hastening to thee, now Soul, I am taking care for thee, my sports and my pleasures, and my lusts, are the way to make God sure, and Heaven sure to me.* Can you say so? Will not your own heart tell you, that is not the way? If Heaven be it that I intend, if Salvation be it I mind, sure then I am not out of my way?

3. Look Heaven-ward, and take encouragement thence to go on, View the glory that is above, and consider what happy men you would be, if you were once safely there: and let such thoughts press you to hasten on, and encourage you against all the labours and difficulties you must first pass through. Think with your selves, when you are setting upon any duty, If I can get well through this duty, I shall be one step nearer Heaven; When you come to the beginning of every day well, I shall this evening be gotten one dayes journey nearer home; when you are falling into any trouble or affliction, if I can cut my way well through this wave, I shall be so much nearer Harbour.

Every *new degree* added to your *grace*, is, *another stone* laid up upon the building of *glory*, every *holy Duty* you have rightly performed, you are gotten *one round* higher in *Jacob's Ladder*; look how many dayes you have walked with God, so many

many dayes journey you are nearer your rest. Look how many troubles and temptations you have gotten Christianly through, so many gulfs have you shot, so many rocks have you passed by towards your harbour.

Oh! if such thoughts and considerations were continually upon your hearts, and before your eyes, how strangely would they quicken you, and encourage you on your way! Consider, Christians, and thence take courage, after a few dayes more, a few duties more, a few wayes more, you will be safely landed in your Countrey. *Lift up your eyes and see, and then lift up your heads and rejoyce to see, how by every duty and difficulty your redemption draweth nigh.* A traveller in his journey, that's almost spent and tired, if he once comes within sight of home, and be almost there, this adds new strength and life, and on he goes again amain. Let your eye be more on your home, and there will be *less lathering or weariness* in your way.

II. *Walk on your way in the name of Christ.* Or, *live by faith,* Gal. 2. 20. *The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God.* The strength of a Christian is his Faith; the strength of Faith is Christ; the strength of Christ is put into the Promises. If you would live to God, live by Faith, if you would live by Faith, go often to the Promises.

1. Study the Promises, the sweetness of them; there's *Grace* in the Promise. The fulness of them, there's *Christ* in the Promise, and with him all things; there's wisdom, righteousness, strength; there's bread, and cloaths, and lands.

and friends and safety : Study the *sureties* of the Promises, there's an *Yes and Amen* set to them : *All the Promises of God are Yes and Amen.*

2. Set thy *Seal* to them. *Believe that God is true.*

3. Clear up thine interest in them, and thereby make it out that they are *sure to thee.*

4. Treasure up in thy memory, a stock and store of particular promises, which may answer every case of thy life, that so thou mayst have a word alwaies at hand to rely upon. And then,

5. Upon the credit of that word, venture on after thy Lord in any duty, through any sufferings he calls thee to ; whatsoever difficulty thou see'st in thy work, whatsoever danger thou see'st in thy way, whatsoever want, or weakness thou see'st growing upon thee, go on, resting upon *Christ* for success in thy duties, and support under thy trouble, and supply of thy wants, according to his Word.

It may be when thou looke'st before thee upon an holy life, thou wilt say, This is indeed a beautiful and blessed life, if I could attain to it : but oh ! I see there is so much to be done, and so much to be born, that I am in great doubt how I shall ever be able to go through it.

The Lord requires me, if I will come after him, to *deny my self* ; This first Step puts me to a stand ; I doubt I shall stumble and fall at the very Threshold of Christianity. Deny my self ! Alas ! I cannot deny my friend or companion, I cannot deny mine Enemy that entices me to sin. If Satan do but speak a word to me, to draw me aside to iniquity, he presently prevails ;

and

and must I yet deny my self, when I see how *unable* I am to deny mine enemies? I cannot, I c^d not do it. Why, here thy faith, if thou wilt consult with it, will furnish thee with this encouragement, Though thou art able to do nothing of thy self, yet thou may'st be able to do all things *through Christ which strengtheneth thee*, Phil. 4. 13.

Again, thou sayest, The Lord requires me to make me a clean heart, to purge my conscience, to crucifie my lusts: But who am I, that *ever* I should think of doing such great works? I could as easily make a *new world*, as a *new heart*; I can as well stop the Sun in its course, as stop my lusts in theirs; I can as easily dry up the fountains of the great Deep, as cleanse the fountain of my corrupt heart, and purge my self from an evil conscience. I, but now thy faith will tell thee, He that bids thee cleanse thy heart, hath said to thee, *Ezek. 36. 25.* That he will *sprinkle clean water upon thee, and thou shalt be clean from all thy filthiness*. Thy faith will carry thy fountain (of) sin to that fountain that is opened for sin and for uncleanness, *Zeck. 13. 1.* Wherein thou may'st wash and be clean: thy faith will tell thee, *Thy old man is already crucified with Christ*, Rom. 6. 6. *By whom the body of sin is destroyed*; that is, *hath received its death wound*, that thou mayest not serve sin, and that the same mouth that commands thee, *Let not sin reign in thy mortal body*, the same mouth hath promised thee, *Sin shall not have dominion over thee*.

But yet thou addest, The Lord commands me to keep my heart, to keep my tongue, mine eyes, to make straight steps to my feet, that I turn aside to no iniquity,

sayings, that I turn aside from all temptations to sin, I stain from all appearance of evil; and many a more like words hath he given me in charge, requiring me to walk in all his Commandments, and to keep all his Statutes and Judgements, to do them; these are hard sayings, who can hear them? But he that said this, (saith Faith) said one word more that will make all this easier. *Ezek. 36. 37. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgements, and do them.*

Once more thou reptest, but Christ commands me *to take up my Cross*, to suffer with him, to part with all I have, to lay down my life for his Name. Can I do so little for his Name, and am I ever like to be able to suffer for his Name? Am I put so hard to it in every light affliction that befalls me, and is it possible I should be able to resist unto blood? The Lord pardon me, I have found that a little shame or reproach is more than I can well bear; a scoff or a scorn for Christ, to what impatience hath it often put me? Have I run with the foot-men, and have these wearied me? how then shall I contend with horses? *But God is faithful, 1 Cor. 10. 13. who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* The Lord will lay on thee (saith Faith) no more than thy load; either he will encrease thy strength, or not encrease thy burthens. He that hath given thee a little strength to go through small trials, hath said, he will, and thou mayest trust him, if he lay more load on thee, give thee more strength to bear it. The Lord will either enable thee to die

for his Name, or he will not call them so

Christians, believe God, to him that believes, all things are possible, and, if you believe, they shall be so to you : He hath said he will be, and therefore you may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper*. Trust in the Lord, and keep his way ; trust in the Lord, and be doing good, and verily you shall be fed, verily you shall be assisted, verily you shall be supported ; commit your way to him, and whatever difficulty there be in your work, he shall bring it to pass : commit the keeping of your selves to him, and you shall be kept by his power, through faith unto salvation. Faithful is he that hath called you, and will do it. Distrust your selves as much as you will, but distrust not your Rock : you are weak creatures, but you have a strong God : you have empty hearts, but a full Saviour : you have but a poor stock in your selves, but a rich stock in the Promise, whence you shall have such a continual supply, that your barrel of meal shall not waste, nor your cruse of oyl spend, till you have finished your work and your course. Hang on your crucified Lord, take hold on his Covenant, take hold on his Strength, go forth in his Strength and Name, and then fear not ; your difficulties shall vanish, your way shall prosper, your Souls shall flourish, you shall have your fruit unto Holiness, and your end everlasting Life.

III. *Deny your selves.* *Matth. 16. 24. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.* Remember your Covenant, you have given your
selves •

thyself to the Lord, and are now no longer your own; you are not debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh; you owe your flesh no observance; you have already paid it more than its due; let them that live, live to the Lord; let them, for whom Christ died, live no longer to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.

Christ and Self are contrary; you cannot serve these two Masters: If you will not deny your self, you cannot but deny your Lord; and if you can deny your self in any thing, you will deny Christ in nothing: If you can heartily say, *Not my will, but thine be done.*

But what is this Self we must deny? I answer, as Christ said to the Woman of Samaria, *He whom thou hast for thy Husband, is not thy Husband*: That which thou holdest for thy self, is not thy self; thou callest it, and countest it thy self, and lovest and cherishest it as thy self, but it is not thy self. That which is here called thy self, is elsewhere in Scripture called thy flesh, thy corrupt, or carnal part; that corruption that is gotten into thy understanding, and sits there, giving thee evil counsel; That corruption which is gotten into thy will, and sits there, swaying thee in all things to choose thy lust; that is gotten into thy appetite, and makes thee to fall a lusting after all things that are pernicious to thee, and a resisting all that would do thee good. This is thy self to be denied, the corruption of thy nature, that hath insinuated it self into all thy parts and powers, and governs thee in all thy actions. This is it which carries thee from God, keeps thee from Christ, resists the Word of Life, leads thee out of the way of Life, leads thee about after

thy pleasures and sports, and companions, holds thee down to this earth, and is dragging thee to Hell.

This is it which makes sinners say concerning the Word of Life, *The Word that is spoken to us in the Name of the Lord, we will not do, but will do whatsoever proceeds out of our own mouths*: That makes them say concerning Christ, *we will not have this man to Reign over us*: Let the World reign if it will, let the Devil reign if he will, let Pride, and Envie, and Malice reign if they will; but whosoever reigns, this man shall not reign over me. 'Tis this that layes so many blockes, creates so many difficulties in the way of Holiness, makes this way seem too strait and narrow, the duties of it impossible, the troubles of it intolerable. Were it not for this, the way of Christ would be easie, and his burthen light: This is that Self which must be denied, if you will follow Christ.

If you ask what it is to *deny self*? In short, it is to shake off its government, to resist its reasonings, to disobey its commands, to refuse to follow its inclinations, or satisfie its lustings.

Brethren, whatever Christ counsels you to, or commands (as I told you) this *Self* will be reasoning against it, and counter-manding it. When Christ says, Be humble, be watchful, be circumspect, be perfect, labour, run, strive, suffer; Your flesh will contradict, this is an hard Master, these are hard sayings; all this is both needless and intolerable. Shake off thy heavy yoke, and take thy liberty, turn out of this straight way, and take thy course; pity thy self, spare thy self, and put not thy self

self to such hard service when thou mayest be free; at least, thou mayest abate something of this strictness: If thou wilt be holy, what needest thou so much care and labour about it? Allow thyself some liberty, some ease, some pleasure. And if you yield in a little, then it will counsel you to take a little more, and a little more, and never give over till it hath reasoned you out of Christianity, and commanded you into very Brutes or Devils.

But what shall we do, or how shall we deal with this Self when it is thus set upon us?

Why, return the same Answer to it as Christ did to Peter, when he gave him the like counsel, *Master, pity thy self. Get thee behind me Satan.* (saies he) Hold thy peace, Devil, Speak no more thus to me; Say to this Flesh, as the men of Sodom said to Lot, Gen. 19. *Stand back: This fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a Judge, or a Ruler.* Thou art stollen in, I know not how, stollen into my head, stollen into my heart, and now thou thinkest to be a Counsellor to be a Ruler. Stand back (*Flesh*) hold thy peace, for I may not hearken to thee. Say to it as the King of Israel said concerning the Prophet, *I hate him, for he never speaks good to me, but evil.* Say to this wicked Flesh, as those wicked ones said against the Lord, *The word which thou hast spoken to me, I will not do.* The liberty thou demandest, thou shalt not have: the pleasure, and the ease which thou cravest, I will not allow thee: my Lord, whom thou counsellest me against, shall be my Lord; him will I love, him will I obey, him will I follow in all that he shall

shall say to me: I will not pamper this *Flesh*, but pinch it the more: I will not humour this fleshly mind, but cross it the more: I will not feed this fleshly appetite, but hold it the shorter for its cravings and lustings: I will not Pray the less, or Fast the less, or Hear the less, because this *Flesh* is against it, but will Pray the more, and Fast the more, and beat down this bodie, and bring it into subjection with the more care and diligence: I will starve this proud beggar, and weary it out of its imperious demands; it shall get nothing, if I can help it, by all this ado it makes, but shall rather be held the shorter; I will the rather deny my self what I may allow my self, because I will not feed or foster such an enemy.

Oh Christians! What an exact life might we live, and with what ease might we go on our holy course, if this enemy were once well laid? What an uncontrolled dominion might our Lord have over us, if this Self were pulled down from sitting with him in the Throne? And how much might be done to the destroying of it, by our constant denying it? Keep the *Flesh* low, and by degrees you kill it.

But woe to us, what Friends are we of this Enemy? how *gently do we deal with this old man*? What provision do we make for this *Flesh*? What we have a mind to, we must have; what we have a mind to do, we will do; whither we have a mind to go, we will go, and seldome give our Reasons, or our Consciences liberty to say to us, *What dost thou*? or once to judge, whether it be good for us, or fit for us, or safe to us, or
no?

no? We are just like some fond Parents; if their Child cry, though it be but for a knife, or a hand full of dirt; it must have it to still it. A wise Parent will rather give his Child a Rod, than that which will hurt it; and knows that this will be hurt enough, that a Child should always have its will: Oh check and whip this Brat, and let not thy Soul sparr for its crying. Better the Child cry, than the Parent; better the Flesh cry, than the Soul and Conscience.

But oh what a sad wonder is it to observe, how strangely indulgent too many Christians are this way; who suffer their flesh to leave them almost to any thing; who in a self-seeking, flesh-pleasing life, have equalled and even out-gone many of the carnal world. What a liberty have many that seem to be Christians, even of the highest sort, often taken in the days of their prosperity? Some seeking great things for themselves, driving so hard after estates, honour, high places, &c. as if they meant to return, and take their portion with the men of this world. Others living in pleasure, with Solomon, Eccles. 2. 10. *Whatever their eyes desire, they keep not from them; they withhold not themselves from any joy.* Who, as if they hoped to charm their flesh out of its enmity, or to kill it by kindness; or if this were the Enemy, which when it hungers, they must feed, when it thirsts, they must give it drink; and thereby heap devouring coals upon its head; will not say it nay whenever it craves. Oh what liberty have we seen taken by many such, for excessive feasting, costly attire, vain fashions, frothy, light and carnal merriments.

and despising, and condemnings of the strict, and more self-denying way of more severe mortified Christians; as if this proceeded out of an affection of a voluntary humility, or an ignorance of their Christian liberty.

But is this indeed the way to crucifie the flesh? Or have you gotten it so much under command already, that now you can securely trust it with any thing it would have, without fear of its getting head, and making war against Christ or your Souls again?

Look to your selves, Christians; look back, and consider, whether your Souls have not suffered; whilst your flesh have been thus surfeited; whether there have not been some abatements made to Christ, for every such allowance granted to the flesh; and whether God hath not been provoked; whilst self hath been thus pleased. Think sadly, whether this abuse of our liberty be not something that the Lord is now pleading with us about, and scourging us for. We have even put the Lord to it, to cast us into the house of mourning, thereby to repair the breaches that have been made upon our Souls in our houses of Feasting: And our Lord Jesus puts us the harder to the second Lesson, *Take up your Cross*, because we did no better learn our first, *Deny your selves*.

IV. *Order your selves aright.* Beloved, if you will observe the former Rules well, all that remains will be the more easie, and I shall be the better in it. *Order your selves aright*, in those things I mean, that especially concern your own selves; keep your own hearts with all diligence

gette, look well to your own ways, Gal. 5. 14. Every man prove his own work, and then shall he be rejoicing in himself, and not in another. Keep a strict and severe eye upon your selves; hold a strict hand upon your selves, be more severe towards your selves, than towards all the World. It's an ill sign, to see Professors of Religion severe in their observings, imposing upon, and censuring others; and more remiss towards themselves. Be more candid and charitable towards others; but exercise more severity at home.

In the right ordering your selves, take great care that you,

1. Allow not your selves in the least known Sin.
2. Live not in the neglect of any known Duty.
3. Take heed of the World.

4. Be Humble.
5. Be Temperate.
6. Be Moderate.

That you allow not your selves in the practice of the least known sin. Do not look on this as any Apology for sin, or your easier entertaining of it, That it is but a little one.

There is no sin that can properly be termed little. The least iniquity will cost either the Blood of Christ, or the blood of your own Souls.

Little Sins are spreading sins; a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Elijah Clouds; out of the bignesse of a Mans hand, in a few hours, clusht the whole Heavens in black. You will

find it something in your Repentance, which you counted as nothing in the Commission.

Little sins are *leading sins*; the child conveyed in at the Window, will open the door to let all the great Thieves in. When *Our* came into the world, his Mother said, *Behold a Troop cometh*, 2 King. 6. 33. When the Messenger of the King of Israel came to the Prophet, *Shut the door, hold him fast* (says he) *at the door; Is not the sound of his Masters feet behind him?* Shut the door against every sin, for whose Messenger is it? Look behind, and see who comes after; *Is not the sound of his Masters feet behind him?* The Devil is not far off, whenever Sin knocks for admission; and the door being opened to the Messenger, it's like to stand open for the Master to enter: Take heed, Brethren, that you do not give a *toleration* to any sin; little sins *allowed*, become great sins. The allowance of sin is that which makes the great wast upon *Conscience*, and the great spoil upon our peace. I will not say, what grace there may be in the heart, but sure there is but little *tenderneſſe* in the *conſcience*, that doth not bid defiance to the least of Sins.

Beloved, if Sin doth get the possession of any time of your hearts, let it be rather upon *ſurprize*, than *ſurrender*; be ſo watchful, that if it be poſſible, you may not be ſurpriz'd by ſin, or taken at unawares; but whatever you do, let you do not ſurrender your ſelves to it; be ſo jealous, that if it may be, Sin may not ſteal in upon you in a diſguiſe, but when you ſee what it is, be ware of it as of the Devil: Will you let a known

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Enemy

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Enemy lodge within you? Brethren, do not shut
your eyes against sin, nor open your doors to it.
Shut not your eyes against it, be willing to know it,
do not go about to perswade your selves concern-
ing any thing you have a mind to, that it is not sin-
ful, that it may be lawful enough, for ought you
know, but examine it, and look through it impar-
tially, and if you find it to be sin, receive it not in.
I cannot well say, whether of the two be in the
worst case, those that are not willing to know they
do, or those that *do what they know to be evil*; but
this I can say, that neither the one nor the other,
(if there be any thing of God in them) are like to
know whether there be or no; such winkings will
blind their eyes, and such walkings will blot their
Evidences, and both hinder that progress in holi-
ness, which is necessary to build them up in com-
fort. If you would be sure the Lord is yours, keep
close to him, if you would keep close by God, keep
clear of sin, and if you would keep clear of sin, keep
your *Windows open, but your doors shut*; see who 'tis
that knocks before you, let them in. An open eye,
and a tender conscience, will be the best security
to both your grace and peace.

Live not in the neglect of any known duty. The
Soul may be served not only by your doing evil,
but by your doing nothing. We obey the will of
the flesh, when we only neglect to obey the will of
God: As our Commissions stab, so our Omissions
wound our souls. God will not, and our souls can-
not want a duty; our lameness in our practise, will
quickly appear in the leanness of our Souls.

Omissi-

O millions will be reckoned for a Judgment, and therefore must be reckoned, and repented of now. Do not content *your* selves with a *negative holiness*, that you do not harm; do not think it enough, to be able to say, *I know nothing by my self*, no hurt that I have done; suppose you do not, yet *thereby are you not justified*. God will judge you, and may condemn you, for what you have (*not*) done. If you had nothing to answer for, but your neglects: The neglects of one day, of one hour, will undo you for ever; if you have not a Christ to answer for you. To be holy hath more in it than to be harmless. There must be doing your duty, as well as departing from iniquity, *Isa. 1. 16. Cease to do evil, learn to do well.*

Nor is it a little now and then that will serve. There must be continuance in well-doing, a readiness to every good work, a fruitfulness in good works, a faithfulness in good works. *Well done good and faithful Servant.* That's a faithful servant, that hath done his best, that hath not voluntarily neglected any thing of his Masters work, nor wasted any of his Masters talents: that's able to say, though I have not done what I ought, yet I have endeavoured to do what I can. Everie neglect is a degree of unfaithfulness. If ye will be the servants of Christ, be faithful servants; and that you may be so,

1. *Neglect not any kind of Duty*; One thing lacking may be the losse of all. You can hear, it may be, but you cannot pray; you can pray in secret, but you cannot pray in your Families; you can instruct your Families, but you cannot

govern them ; you can love the *Saints*, you say, but you neglect the *communion of Saints* ; you can be just in your *dealings*, but you cannot be *charitable* ; you can give an *Alms* to an *hungry bodie*, but you cannot give *counsel* to a *sinful soul* ; you can give *counsel*, but you cannot give a *reproof* ; *this* or *that* you cannot bring your heart to ; but take heed, though you cannot bring your heart to it, yet neglect not to be working your heart to it, to be *persuading*, and *reasoning*, and *praying* your heart to it ; take heed there be not an *Act of Indulgence* passed for this neglect : take heed you do not say, the Lord pardon me in this thing, and so give off, and let it alone.

2. Neglect not any opportunity of *dutie*. Whenever the Lord calls to *duty*, let your heart answer : whenever the Lord opens a door for any *service*, take the season.

1. Be watchful, and observe every opportunity. Sometimes the Lord puts *thine enemy* into *thine hand*, gives thee some *special advantage* against such a *lust* or *corruption* : Sometimes the Lord puts a *price* into *thy hand*, an opportunity of getting in, or laying up for thy *Soul*, an opportunity of *laying out* for God or thy *Soul*, observe diligently all such seasons. Thou maiest do more, or get more, in such an hour, than in many daies after.

2. Keep thy heart in a disposednesse, and constant towardlinesse to *Dutie* : be alwaies prepared to everie good work ; see that however sometimes thou maiest want power to perform, yet to will may be alwaies present. When a price is put into *thine hand*, see thou want not

a heart to it; When thine Enemy is in thine hand, let not thy heart spare it, let not thine heart be out of the way, whenever the season serves; let not thy heart recur thus upon thee afterward, *O what a day have I lost?* how much seed might I have sown this day for Eternity? what a treasure might I have laid up for Everlasting?

3. Above all, take heed you (live) not under a neglect of duty. The most diligent and vigilant Christians have too many neglects, but see that you are not guilty of any neglect in ordinaries; that there be not any thing that you know to be your dutie, which you commonly, and of course, passe over, so that this day, is even as yesterday, and to morrow, and next day, and next week, and so on, is like to be as this day. Whatever it be that you perform, such a neglect as this will unavoidably hinder the thriving of your Souls in the Grace of God. For,

1. The guilt of such a neglect, will wither and mar the beauty of what is done, and the Lord will have such a standing controversie with you for what is not done, that he will not accept or prosper what is done.

2. There will be the want of the influence of those duties that are neglected. We cannot want a duty, but we may afterwards find the want of it in the state of our Souls. Grace out of exercise grows to decay, and if one of thy spiritual members suffer or rust, the whole body suffers with it.

3. The Devil will fill up the vacuities of our lives. There is not a void Plat in thy Garden,

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but the Devil will be sowing his seed: If you do
the Devil will not leave an empty day, nor an empty
hour of your lives: If grace do not fill up each
day with the duties of it, he will fill it up with sin.
'Tis an hundred to one, but a weed grows up in the
room, where a Flower is wanting.

Brethren, if you would be thriving Christians, be
Universal Christians, for any work your Master hath
to do; be ingenuous Christians; willing to know
your whole duty; be watchful Christians, that you
may know your duty seasons; and then be faith-
ful, allow not yourselves in, be not patient with
your selves under any neglect.

3. *Take heed of the world.* If you be Christians,
Christ hath gotten the better of the world, hath
gotten the preheminnence in you, and brought the
world under. If it be so, take heed it get not head
again; and that you may be both secured from the
snarcs of the world, and make your best advanta-
ges, as Christians of it, Take these following Direc-
tions.

1. *Never make an exchange of Christ, or any thing
of Christ, for the world, or any thing that is of the world;*
never buy or purchase any thing of the world at so
dear a rate, as the losse of any thing of Christ.
Lose not any degree of grace, for the gaining this
worlds goods; lose not a spiritual duty, for the at-
tending on a worldly business. Enrich not your bo-
dies upon the impoverishment of your Souls.

What possession or use of this world, you may
have without your spiritual prejudices, enjoy it.

and be thankful; but beware you do not forsake
up with the businesses, and take in the advantages
of this earth, that your souls suffer losse; that
you should ever have occasion to say of any thing
you have done or gotten, *This is the price of my
peace*, this is the price of my comfort, this is the
price of a Sabbath, or a Sacrament, or a Prayer; I
have lost a Sabbath, I have lost my communion
with God in prayer; I have abated the life and the
vigour, and exercise of my grace; and this is all I
have for it, some addition to my outward state: I
have more of earth, but so much the less of *Heaven*,
more *Gold*, but the less *Grace*, more of this *Mam-
mon*, but so much the less *Manna*, more of the *Ci-
stern*, but so much the less of the *Fountain*. Be-
loved, it was never the intent of the Gospel to strip
you of this worlds goods, but to secure you only
from the mischief of it: be but so watchful, and
so fearful, and so wise, and wary in the managing
your worldly businesses, in the improving or se-
curing your worldly estates, that you be not here-
by losers upon a spiritual account, that you may
have what you have as *an addition*, but not so in
commutation for Christ, and he will never begrutch
it you, or blame you for it.

2. *Let not Christ and the world again change pla-
ces or interests.* If Christ hath your hearts, let
him not again be thrown under your feet; If
the world be gotten under foot, let it not again
get up into the throne, let it be your servant if
you will, but let it never again be your God.
Let Christ be the chief in you, let him have the
highest esteem, the dearest, the strength of your
affection

affections, the great command of you : Let the Word of Christ be of more power with you, and carry you farther, than all the gains and glory of the World. Let not this be your rule, *To follow Christ and Holiness so far as you may, without any prejudice to your worldly interest;* but let this be it, *Follow the world so far only as you may, without being false or unfaithful to Christ.* Venture on in Holiness to the greatest hazard of your estate, but venture not after this, with the least hazard of your Religion. Resolve to be Christians, whether you be rich or poor, but endeavour not to be rich, but upon such terms that you may be never the lesse Christians. Especially take heed that the *Prosperity* of the World steal not away your hearts : *Psal. 62. 10. If riches (increase) set not your hearts upon them.* 'Tis hard to prosper in the world, and not to prostitute our hearts to it. Temptation of prosperity are the worlds courting, and complementing, and wooing of our love : If ever a Suitor be like to prevail, it is when he puts on his best array, and trims up himself in his Richest and most enticing habit. Prosperity is the *World in its glory*; when ever it presents it self thus to you, then take heed lest you forget God, and prove *Adulterers and adulteresses* from Christ.

3. Let not the Lord want any thing that you have. There is nothing that you have, but it may one time or other be said to you, *The Lord hath need of it*; and if he hath, let it go : If the Lord say, *I have need of it*; do not you say, *I cannot spare it* : Desire to have only for use, and what you have be willing to use it, and use it well. *My thing*

ing is well used but what is used for God, That which is bestowed on your selves, or your Children, is misused if it be not bestowed there for the Lord: Let the title God to all you have, write his Name upon it, and make it up for him. *This is his Wool, and his Flax, and his Corn, and his Silver, and his Gold, and use it for him.*

If your lusts, your pride, or your gluttony, or your envie, if your sports, or your pleasures, or your companions, demand any thing to be spent on them, or given to them, let your answer be, *It is not mine to give*; or what *Nabals* was to *David*, when he sent to him for provision for himself and his followers, *1 Sam. 25. 10. What is David, or who is the son of Jesse? Shall I take my bread, and my wine, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men whom I know not whence they be?* What are these lusts? What is this pride? What are these treasures? Shall I take these good things which the Lord hath given me, and bestow them upon such vile things as these? Were these things given me to feed mine enemies, and the enemies of God? To feed Snakes and Adders, Vipers, and scorpions? Was this the end why God hath made me greater than others, that I might be more ticked than others? Hath God made me Rich, that I might be a drunkard, or an adulterer, that I might maintain my pride, and my pomp, and my carnal pleasures? Hath God made me a rich man, that I might make my self a beast.

Beloved, the Lord hath rather lent you than given you what you have; you are but
stewards

rewards of his manifold gifts he hath put into your hands, you must give an account to God for your receipts and disbursements, and your account will be but a lame account, if you bring any thing laid out, that is not laid out for God. Let not the cause of God, or Religion want any thing you have: Let not the poor Saints, or any of the poor afflicted ones of the Lord, go without their parts: Let it not be said of any of you, *good they had been beggars, as rich men, for any good they have done.* He that hath gotten such power over all he hath of this world, that he can freely dispose of it to its proper use, may be numbered among those that have overcome the world; and is in the less danger of finding it a temptation and a snare to him.

4. *Be you able to want what you have not.* To be able to want the world, is a greater honour and comfort, than to possess and enjoy it. I know not which is more difficult, to be able to use well, or to be able to want it; but ordinarily he that can do one, can do both; he that can carry himself as a Christian in his plentie, will be able also to carry himself so in his penurie. The Apostle tells us, that he had learned how to do both, *Phil. 4. 12. I know how to be abased, and how to abound: In all things I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need.* Worldly men can do neither, they know not how to be rich, nor how to be poor; how to be in credit, nor how to be in disgrace; they can neither bear wealth nor want, that is, they know not how to be as they should be.

... If they are rich, and in credit, then they are proud, and wanton, and riotous, and luxurious; if they are poor, and in disgrace, then they are impatient, and discontented, and envious of those whose wayes do prosper: if they are full, they forget God, if they are emptie, then they fret themselves against the Lord. To be able to want, and to abound, is the same, as to be able to be a Christian, and to carry himself as becomes a Christian in both estates: to be able to hold on in a Christian course, without being hindered or turned aside by the one or the other: to be able to be holy with the world or without it: On the one side, to be able to be high, and yet humble; honourable, and yet honest; rich in this worlds goods, and yet rich in good works, to bear his burthen of thick clay, without either sinking his spirit, or slackening his pace heavenwards; and on the other side, to be able to be poor and patient, afflicted and chearful, comfortable, contented, and as constantly serving the Lord in the want of all things, as others do in the possession of all things. To be able to live by faith, though he hath never so much else to live upon, and to be able to live by faith, when he hath nothing else.

Christians, if you can want, you shall never want. He hath enough, that is able to spare that which he hath not. If you can want the world, the world will then want a temptation, either to encrease you from, or discourage you in your holy life; you may then be Christians in spite of all the world.

5. Above all, *Take heed you be indeed gotten out of the world, from under its dominion.* Men may go far in Religion, and yet may perish in the world at last: its dreadful to consider, how many sad instances there are to be found among Professors of Christianity, who have seemed to have much love to Christ, and thought they love him sincerely, whose hearts are yet secretly chained to the world. There is many a Professor that hath made a fair shew, and given great hopes, and hath gotten up both in his own and others Opinion, even to the highest rank of Saints, and is perswaded in his Conscience, that he is upright with God, and yet his heart doth secretly cleave more strongly to the World than to Christ, and so may perish everlastingly. As there may be secret pride that Men may be guilty of, and not know it; so there is secret hypocrisie, reigning hypocrisie that men may be guilty of, so there is a secret reigning covetousness that men may live and die, and be damned in, when they never suspected it; and this I fear is a more common case than is supposed: When we see men owning the Gospel, setting up the exercises of Religion in their Families and Cloisters, Praying like Saints, Speaking like Angels, melted in tears, raised in joys, separated from the world, holding communion, and in many things holding pace with the best of Saints: When we see such persons (and are there not such to be seen?) so excessively greedy, and so industrious driving on after the World, so constantly busy in laying house to house, and field to field, so

possessed with worldly cares, so extremely pinching and penurious, so hard-hearted, and strait-banded towards those that are in need, hiding themselves many times from their own flesh, whose worldliness is apparently too hard for their Religion, whose Religious duties must in ordinary give place to their worldly business, but their affection to Christ does make no abatement upon their earthly appetite and Worldly cares, but is ordinarily abated by it; who can say to duty, *Stand aside*; to prayer, *stand aside*; to hearing or meditation, give place, when ever they have a Worldly business before them; but seldome or never can say, *Stand aside World, Stand aside Ours, and Sheep, and Trades, and Livings, I have a God, and a Soul to be looked after*; but can content themselves for that, with those few leisure times they have, wherein they have nothing else to do, and yet notwithstanding, because there is something of Religion kept going, and at times, some strong workings of their affections that way, thereupon do comfort their hearts, and conclude all is well, nay, let them be never so plainly dealt withall, and warned to beware and look to themselves, lest they be found *lovers of this world, and strangers from Christ*, yet they cannot see it, they cannot be perswaded, but their hearts are sincere: What can be thought of such persons, but that they are like to die forever, by their secret adultery against God, which they will hardly be perswaded to suspect themselves guilty of: Look to it that this be not your case, be sure you be gotten clear of the world, and that Christ hath the preeminence
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in you. The Devil will *allow* you to have some respect for Christ, some affection to Religion; will allow you profession, allow you duties, allow you good company; let them pray, let them hear, let them associate with the Saints, so long as the World governs their hearts, they are sure enough. Some indeed there he holds in *arcta custodia*, close prisoners, that do wholly mind earthly things; though he could wish his captives were all in such a case, without the least sense or shew of Religion; yet those that he cannot keep under so great a restraint, he is content to hold in *libera custodia*, as prisoners at large, any liberty to pray, to hear, &c. that they may take, and yet be prisoners, he allows to them: if you be not close prisoners, if the Devil does suffer you now and then to walk abroad, and exercise your selves in the duties, and refresh your selves with the delights, and feed your selves with the hopes of Religion; if you be not close prisoners, yet are you not prisoners still? Oh let it not content you, that you are prisoners at large: Oh let nothing content you, but your enlargement out of prison, so that you are no longer prisoners to the world, but Christs free-men.

Be humble, keep your hearts low; be low in your own eyes; think not of your selves above what is meet; be content to be low in the eyes of others: That is the harder lesson of the two; there is many a person that is so conscious of his own poverty and worthlessness, that if he would, he cannot have high thoughts of himself, but yet he would, as Saul, be honoured before the People. Take heed of an inordinate affect

tion of esteem with others. Whilest you pretend only to seek a *good Name*; take heed of affecting a *great Name*. Account your selves with *Paul*, and be content if others account you so too, the *least of Saints*. Whilest others are ambitious, with *Simon*, to be accounted *Some-body*, be you willing to be counted *No-body*; let who will affect to be reckoned amongst the *Worlds great Ones*; let it be enough for you to be accounted amongst *Gods little Ones*. If the Lord hath lifted you up, take heed of lifting up your selves; your work is to abase your selves, and then let God alone to exalt you.

Pride is a *pernicious enemy*, and 'tis one of the last *Enemies* a Christian hath to conquer; a *pernicious Enemy* it is, it casts us out of the heart of God and men; God resists, and men despise the proud. A proud man; whilest he is his own *Idol*, is others scorn; it deprives of comfort, it spoils duty, it keeps us barren: A proud man is like the high mountains, there's little good that grows there; the lower ground is ever the more fruitful: He is like *Ephraim*, an *empty Vine*, emptie to God-wards, all his fruit is brought forth to himself.

An humble Christian hath this advantage in his duties, he hath none to please but God; let God accept me; and let others think of me what they will: A proud person hath his lust to please, the eyes and ears of others to gratifie; God and his Soul can have but little of him; that hath so manie to mind; pride blasts all that little good it's mingled with; 'tis as the flie in the pot; that murther all the oyntment: Christian, if thou
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hadt nothing else to keep thee humble, thy pride might do it, and would, if thou duly laidst it to heart.

Pride is one of the last enemies, and longest liv'd that a Christian hath to deal withal; it will rise up out of the ashes, and ruins of other lusts; 'tis not seldom that men are proud, that they are not covetous, or prodigal, or intemperate; nay, it sometimes rises up out of its own ashes: Men may be proud of their humility, proud, that they are not so proud as they have been: And can you be too watchful against such an Enemy?

Be humble Christians; be humble, if you will be holy. Humility is of the Essence of the New-creature: he is not a Christian, that is not humble.

And yet, Oh how much of this Pride have too many of us to charge upon our selves? When our eye is so much at Self, and so little at God, in all we do; when we are so tender, and so touchie at any thing that reflects upon our selves, and so little affected with the dishonour of God, when our very abasing our selves is in order to the exalting of our selves: In our very Confessions of the pride of our hearts, do we not sometimes hope, that the sense which we discover of this evil, will more advance, than the evil it self will impair our reputation? When whatever evils we acknowledge by our selves, we are in hope they will not be believed: When we cannot bear it, to be reprov'd, or to hear from the mouth of another, what our own mouths do testifie against us: When we love to speak in our own praise, or if we have more wit, than to be vainlie boasting of our selves, yet we love

love to hear our selves commended by others? When we are envious at those that out-shine us, and so stand in the way of our reputation: When we are so impatient of being contradicted, that those that are not of our mind, are not for our company: Do not our habits, our looks, our company, or behaviour, our distances which we keep from those below us, sadly discover what there is in our hearts? Oh Brethren, how is it that our hearts tremble no more, to behold this monstrous devilish sin appearing in us? How can we take pleasure? How can we take comfort in the best of all our parts, or duties, or enjoyments, which are so stain'd with this pride? Which is even as great an Ornament to any true worth that is in us, or in any thing we do, as a blister, or a carbuncle, to a beautiful face: How is it that we do not ofener question whether such a measure of pride as we find in our selves, can stand with true grace? How is it that we are no more asham'd to draw nigh unto God, when our hearts tell us, how false we have been to him in all our services? What an *Image of jealousy* have we set up; another God, besides the Lord, which must at least divide with him, in all the fruits that are growing up, out of any thing we have received from him.

Christian, Labour to know thy self more thoroughly; and amongst all the lusts of thy heart, which might, if understood, bring thee low, take particular notice of this thy self-exalting Spirit, and if this do not abase thee, and shame thee, and lay thine honour in the dust, thou art proud indeed.

5. *Be Temperate.* In the use of Creatures, I mean, beware of Excesse; Eat and Drink for service, nor barely for pleasure: Let not your Lord be a loser by his bounty to you, lose not a dutie in a Dinner; A full Meal makes many a drowfie and short *duty*. If you be given to *Appetite*, take heed, *give not to your Appetite* all it craves; let not *Appetite*, but Conscience be your measure. Eat not your Souls into leanness, let not your Table become your Snare, and that which is given you for your Health, become your Disease. When you are at your meat, remember your work, and let that limit you; be only so free in your food, as may make you more fit for service? He that hath such a race to run, such a warfare before him, must be temperate in all things, or he may lose the goal and the battel: not only Drunkards and Gluttons, but even Christians that are accounted sober, are more peccant this way, than they are ordinarily sensible of. Their spirits would be more free, their services would be more lively, their work would be more easie, and their way more pleasant, if they were but more temperate. Christians, let this Scripture meet you at your Tables, as well as elsewhere, *Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the Glory of God.*

6. *Be moderate,* Phil. 4. 5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.* Maintain such a tranquility and serenity of mind, let all be quiet, and in such a due and equal composure within you, that it may appear in your carriage without. Let there be no noises, nor tumults, but as much as possible, let there be a constanc

stant silence and calm upon your Spirits. Moderate your cares; moderate your fears; moderate your passions: Say to your Spirits, when they begin to swell, as Christ to the Wind and Waters, *Peace, be still*, Get the Command of all within you, and keep them under constant discipline; be careful for nothing; fear nothing; be impatient of nothing, that whatsoever happens to you without, you may be able to say with the Apostle, *None of these things move me*. Be not like those weakly bodies, whose temper changes with the weather. Be able to bear whatever changes happen from abroad, without any perturbations or perplexing commotions at home. *In your patience possess ye your souls*. Christians, if you can but keep your temper, whatever happens, you may keep your way, and hold on your course whatever happens; An heart out of quiet, will put your whole Man out of course. If you can but be quiet and patient, you may be any thing; you may do any thing, that God will have you be or do. Let your fears, and your passions, and your impatiencies loose, and whither will they carry you? When you should be denying your selves, you will then be shifting for your selves, when you should be following Christ, you will then be running from Christ; when you should be working out your salvation, all your care will be taken up how to save your selves in a whole skin. Let these be well laid, and you will have nothing to do, but to follow your work, and to run your Race which God hath set before you.

V. *Carry your selves well towards others*. A Christians work doth not lye all about himself;

Though your own Souls be concerned in all you have to do, yet your care must not be confin'd to your selves alone; you must have a due respect, and a due carriage towards others also.

Carry your selves well.

1. *Towards all men.* Let your Conversations be, as in all things, so towards all men, *as it becometh the Gospel.* I must contract, and here give you only some short hints.

1. *Be True.*

2. *Be Just.*

3. *Be Merciful.*

4. *Be Peaceable.*

5. *Be Courteous.*

1. *Be True.* Take heed of the way of lying; Let sinners know that *a lye is of their Father*; and not of yours. Let the *Word of a Christian* be Sacred. Make sinners say of Saints the same which God sayes of them, *They are children which will not lye*; let their experience force them to acknowledge, *This spot is not the spot of Gods Children.* Be true. A Lye is,

1. Contrary to God, who is a God of Truth, and cannot lie.

2. Conform to the Devil, the Father of Lies.

3. Destructive to Society: there can be no trust, where there is no truth; and no commerce, with those that cannot be trusted.

Temptations to Lying are many, and men are especially tempted to it, in these *Two Cases*;

1. In case of any faults committed. What can't be excus'd, must be conceal'd; and for want of a better covering, they must hide it under a Lye.

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2. In their dealings in the world. In their buying, and selling, and trading. *The trade of lying gets into every Trade, as if there were no living, but by lying.* The Seller must have his lye; there must be lye to set off the Wares, *Its special good, the best of its kind,* when may be 'tis stark nought: A lye to see up the price, *It stood me in so much, I cannot abate,* when, it may be, the next word is a lower price. The buyer must have his lye; a lye to bring down the price, *Its naught, its naught,* saith the buyer: A lye to bring down the seller, *I will not give your price,* and yet give it. Oh how common an evil is this; and how little considered! How few are there that have great dealings in the world, that can altogether acquit themselves of it? How many are there, that live upon lies? that feed themselves with lies? hat cloath themselves with lies, their unlawful gains, that their trade of lying hath brought them in.

Christians, especially you that are most ordinarily under such temptations, be sensible of this evil, and avoid it: be resolved and watchful: Resolve to be true, be true, though it be to your loss; be losers, rather than lyars; Sell not Conscience with your commodities, for a penny or two pence profit extraordinary. Resolve to be true, and be watchful. Consider what you say, before you speak, that you be guilty of falshood, neither purposely, nor unwarily.

2. *Be Just.* Observe that Rule of Righteousness, *Do to others, as you would they should do to you:* And let this Rule be observed in all your words, yea, and your thoughts also, as well as

actions; If you would not be *wronged*, do not *wrong*; if you would not be *oppressed*, do not *oppress*; if you would not be *defrauded*, do not *defraud*; and so, if you would not be *defamed*, or *reviled*, do not *defame* or *revile*: if you would not upon *everie* report or *groundlesse* *surmise*, be *evil* thought of, do not think *evil* of others. You that *professe* *Christianity*, are you altogether *faultless* upon this *account*? Would you that all should come upon you, which by you hath fallen upon others? Would you that all the world should be to you, what you have been to any in the world? If you have been knowingly *unjust* in your *dealings*, yet have you neither been *injurious* in your *words*? Would you that your *faults* and *infirmities* should be the *ordinary* *discourse*, and *table-talk*, and *merriment* of others, and have not yet others *infirmities*, or *faults* been yours? Would you not be *caustly* *suspected*, *condemned*, or *despised* in the thoughts of others, and have you never dealt thus by others?

Is this not too common, and yet little considered? When you are together, *everie* *evil* report that's going, either for want of other *discourse*, or from a worse cause, must be brought in to fill up the time; and *evil* reports quickly beget *evil* thoughts & *surmises*. Do as you would be done by; if you would not be thus dealt with by others, deal not so with others.

3. Be Merciful. Luke 6. 36. Be ye merciful, as your Father is merciful. You have a Merciful Father, you have a Merciful High-Priest; be ye also merciful. As you have received mercy, as you look for mercy, be careful to shew mercy. Give to

to him that asketh, lend to him that would borrow, visit, relieve, refresh the bowels of him that is in misery. Be cheerful in shewing mercy, let your hearts give as well as your hands. Be liberal, be bountiful: He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly: He that is merciless to the bodies of men, is therein cruel to their souls. Hardness and niggardliness in Professors of Religion, will disgrace their Profession, and harden the hearts of sinners from entertaining the Gospel; *Can you persuade me that this is the way of God, that this is true Religion? What a merciless Religion, a merciless Profession! God keep me from such a Religion.* Your feeding of hungry bellies, your cloathing of naked backs, may be a means to save many a soul from death. The penny, besides that it may gain thee many pounds, a plentiful reward, it may gain many a soul to thy Lord.

4. *Be peaceable, Mark. 4. 50. Have peace one with another. Heb. 12. 14. Follow peace with all men.* The Lord is a God of peace, Christians are sons of peace. *The wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be entreated.* Peaceableness stands,

1. In an unwillingness to provoke or offend: A peaceable man will not *break the Peace*, is not quarrelsome or contentious, will not stir up strife, forbears all provoking carriage, hath no provoking tongue, he hath peace in his heart, and that brings forth peaceable language and carriage.

2. In an unaptness to be proved. A peaceable spirit, is a patient spirit.

3. In a readiness to be reconciled, *James 3. 17. Easie to be intreated.* A peaceable spirit is hardly provoked, easily pacified.

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1. In a forwardness to reconcile those that are at variance : A peaceable spirit, is a *peace making spirit* ; such an one is both a *blessed man*, Mat. 5. *Blessed are the peace-makers*, and a *blessing* to those he lives amongst. Our angry, quarrellsome spirit may be a plague, and one peaceable and healing spirit, may be a blessing to a whole society.

5. *Be Courteous*. Sweet and affable in your carriage towards all, 1 Pet. 3. 8. This will much win upon the hearts of those you converse with, and begot their good liking of whatever good they behold in you : This will both mollifie their spirits towards you, and make them more willing to hearken to you : Morosity and sourness, will fright them out of your company, and harden them against your Counsel. Your candor will be the sugar that will help to convey down any pill of admonition or reproof you give them, which otherwise their stomacks would rise against, and spit out in your faces. Carry your selves so to all, that you may convince them that *you are their friends*, the friends of their souls, whilst you appear the enemies of their sins : that *your counsels are the counsels of a friend*, that *your reproofs are the wounds of a friend*, which are better than the kisses of an Enemy.

But still take heed that your courtesie to sinners do not lead you in a compliance with them in their sins, that what you intend as a Net to take their Souls, become not a Trap to take yours. Whilst you are a friend to their persons, beware you be not drawn aside to have fellowship with them in their wickedness. It is better to be uncivil than ungodly. Be as courteous as possible.

yet so far only that your courtesie be neither a share to you, nor an encouragement to them in their sins. Be wise as well as kind.

Christians, do not pass over these second-Table duties (which I have for brevities sake packed up into a narrow room) as the lower things of Religion, wherein you may be excused or dispenced with; which a little praying or confessing will make up, and so you may go on: Truth, and Temperance, and Justice, and Mercy, &c. are to be reckoned among the weightier matters of the Law; there is so much Religion in them, that there can be no Religion without them: Though there may be morality where there is no true Religion, yet there can be no Religion where there is not Morality, Micha 6. 11, 12. *Shall I count them pure, with the wicked ballances, and the bag of deceitful weights? The rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitfull in their mouth. Shall I count these pure? Are these my People? What, holy and not honest, religious and not righteous? What, sincerity without truth, a single heart with a double tongue? What, grace where there is no peace, nor mercy, nor temperance? What railers, and revilers, and quarrellers, and yet religious? James 1. 26. If any man seems to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this mans Religion is vain.* A dreadfull word! There are many Professors of Religion in whom an unbridled tongue is found: How many light and vain words, how many false and deceitful words, especially how many bitter and angry words do we ordinarily hear out of such mouths?

mouths? what biting and devouring, what cutting and provoking, what reproaching and reviling language doth often break forth at the same mouths whence at other times we hear praying and blessing? But can such consider this Scripture without a trembling heart; *This mans Religion is vain*. Vain notes two things,

1. *Empty*: Whatever Religion such men seem to have, there is nothing in it.

2. *Ineffectual*: That is vain that falls short of, and doth not reach its end, nor bring about that for which it is. The end of our Religion is salvation. Whatever Religion *such men have*, it will do them no good, nor stand them in any stead, it will never save their souls; they may die and be damned, and lie in hell for ever, notwithstanding all the Religion they have. All the *conclusions* that men make from such Religion, that they are in a state of grace and salvation, are false and deceitful, that faith, and that hope, and those prayers, which will consist with the raising evils of the tongue, will never be any good evidence of a good state: That which cannot drive the Devil out of the Tongue, will never prove Christ to be in the heart. And all the *expectations* that are hence raised of future blessedness, will undoubtedly deceive them. That Religion which will not tame the Tongue, will never save the soul.

I insist the more on this, because however those evils mentioned, injustice, unmercifulness, intemperance, &c. may possibly be as common, and some of them as pernicious, and the prevailing of them as certainly concluding men in an evil state as this; yet these evils of the tongue, being but
words

words, are more apt to be passed lightly over, and notwithstanding all the mischievous consequences of them, to be less regarded.

But can you make a light matter of that which reproves you damnable Hypocrites? Hast thou spit out all thy Religion in thy furious fits, and yet wilt thou make nothing of them? By this biting and devouring tongue you do not only consume one another, but you consume every man himself, your own peace, your own Comfort, your own hopes, your Religion and Salvation. You see by experience how it devours all the exercises of Religion; what duties are we fit for, whilst our tongues are on fire? Prayer must be laid aside, Reading, or Conference, of God, or of Souls, are turned out of Doors: God himself cannot be heard, conscience cannot be heard, Souls cannot be minded, while those noises and tumults last. And that which doth destroy the exercises of Grace, cannot but destroy its evidences, and bring us at least to question it, if not to conclude it a nullity. I confess some evils of the tongue may consist with Grace in the Heart; but if this Scripture be true, *an unbridled tongue cannot*; Grace cannot hold this unruly member under such constant Government, but it will too often break loose; but where it is not brought under government at all, where the Heart puts spurs to the Tongue, but no bridle; where persons looking upon all this a *matter of nothing*, allow themselves in it; and letting loose the Reins to their Tongues, so ordinarily surrender them up to their *Lusts* and passions, to use at pleasure, and to vent themselves freely by, such men must first disprove the

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Scripture, before they can prove the truth of this Religion.

Christians, you that have been sick of this disease of an evil mouth, bless the Lord if the cure be begun, but rest not till it be perfected. It will ill defile where it doth not destroy. It will defile your names; your evil words will recoil, he that spits against the wind, his spittle is driven back in his own face. It will defile your consciences, your hearts never send forth an evil breath; but there is something of it sticks behind. It will defile your duties; there will be a tincture on your prayers of that foulness of your mouth which your evil words have left behind them. It will defile your profession; that will hardly be spoken well of, which will bear evil speaking. It will disturb where it doth not devour; it will disturb you in your holy course, if it doth not quite divert you, never look to prosper in holiness, or to be fruitful in good works, whilst you break forth into such evil words; these lean kins and thin ears of envy and contention will eat up all your good fruit. I rather wonder to see any thing green in those Gardens, where such Locusts lodge, than that there is no more. Oh Brethren, let us no longer excuse, but judge our selves for this: let our bitterness become bitter to us; let us weep over it, let us watch against it, let us quench those fires within, that there be no more such flames and smok without: let us be sensible of those inward inflammations, of that unquietnesse and unpeaceableness of our spirits, whence all our outward paroxysms arise: they are our foul stomacks that fill our tongues.

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We lay the blame of all upon temptations and provocations, but they are our lusts, our lusts that are in fault, which war in our members. Let us be more sensible of these; let us be humbled, let us be ashamed, that we that profess our selves sons of peace, should harbour such sons of contention in our hearts. Let the experiences we have had, of the loss we have sustained, the guilt we have contracted, the wounds that we have given to our brethren, to our own souls, to the Gospel of our Lord already; let these set us a purging out this our leaven. Let salt be cast into the fountain, that the streams may become sweeter, and when the fountain is healed, then let us sweep the Channel; let there neither be war any longer in our hearts, nor a sword in our mouths. *Let us beat our Swords into Plough-shares, and our Spears into pruning-hooks.* Let our words *plough* up the hearts, and not break the heads; let them pare off, and reprove the sins, and not *reproach* the faces of our brethren: Let us counsel, and admonish, and comfort one another, and provcke to love and good works; but let there be no more bitterness, or strife, or envying, or quarrellings found among us; let us leave these evil fruits, to grow only on evil trees, where we can expect nothing else. Whilst we cannot look to gather Grapes of Thorns, or Olive-berries of Thistles, let not the fruit of the Bramble, or the prickles of the Thistle, be found sprouting out of the root of the Olive. Let the Saints still be found what they were of old, *Doves, Lambs, Lillies,* among Thorns: Let there be nothing that hurts or *tends* in all the Mountain of the Lord. Let the sticking briar, and grieving thorn, be rather in our
sides

place, than in our mouths. Let blessing and praising, and praying, and instructing, take up all the room, that there be no place left for wrath and contention.

And whilst we take this care about our words, let us take as great a care about our works. Let there be no wrangling in our tongues, nor violence in our hands. Let there be no deceit in our Lips; no guile in our dealings; Let us speak the word of truth and sobernesse, and let us keep the way of righteousness and peace. Let us walk humbly with God; and let us do justly, and love mercy, and live peaceably with men; Let good words and good works meet together; let Religion and Righteousnesse kiss each other let peace spring up out of the Earth, as Grace hath looked down from them. Let us add to our Faith Vertue, and to Vertue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godlinesse, to Godlinesse brotherly Kindnesse, to brotherly Kindnesse Charity. Finally, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any Vertue, if there be any Praise, think on these things. Brethren, so speak ye, and so walk; these things do; live in peace and love, and the Gods peace shall be with you.

2. In speciall. Carry your selves well in, and towards your Families. You that are Governours of Families, you have more souls than your own to look to. You have *curam animarum*, the charge of souls lying upon you. You are not only to look to your Families in matters civil, but in matters of Religion.

Relation. In the Law, the Master of the Family was by the appointment of God, to circumsise all the males in his house: In the fourth Commandment, the Master of the Family is charged, not only to keep the Sabbath himself, but to see that his whole Family kept it, *Thou shalt do no work therein*, and not only so, but neither thy Son, nor thy Daughter, &c. Parents are required, *Ephes. 6. 4. To bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; to nurse them up for God, to nourish them up in the words of Faith and good Doctrine, to suckle their souls with the milk of the Word, as well as their bodies with the Milk of the breasts. Now, where there is a charge of Souls, there must be an account given of Souls. When there is a Child brought forth, or a Servant brought into thy Family, God sayes to thee, as the man in the Prophets parable, *1 King 20. 39. Keep this man, look to this man, if he be lost, Thy Life shall go for his Life.* If any in the house perish through thy neglect, thy Life shall go for his life, thy Soul shall go for his Soul. This is thy charge, and if thou be not, faithful, so shall thy Judgment be.

But what must we do for the right ordering and governing our Families? Why,

1. Instruct your Families, teach them the way of the Lord; dwell in your Houses as men of knowledge, and make God known to all yours, by reading, and acquainting them with the Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto Salvation, by Catechizing them, &c.
2. Endeavour their Conversation to God, by speaking oft unto them, of the faithfulness and

miserable of their natural state, of the nature and necessity of conversion, by inquiring often into the state of their Souls.

3. Bring them into Covenant with God; as you have already done it virtually, in bringing them to be baptized; so when they are grown up, and well instructed in the principles of Christianity, and made sensible of their baptismal Engagement, endeavour to bring them to an express dedicating, and engaging themselves to the Lord, according to those directions that have been formerly given to Christians in general.

4. Teach them to pray, and call upon them often, and see to it, that they neglect it not.

5. Pray for them, and pray with them.

6. Dispense your favours and frowns, your corrections and encouragements, not only as they are more or less towards to you-ward, but as they are more or less tractable, and careful in the matters of God.

7. In your disposal of them, either to callings, or in marriage, have a special regard to the advantage of their Souls. I can now but name these particulars, which I have formerly more largely insisted on, and pressed upon you.

8. Be examples of holiness to them, walk in the midst of your house with a perfect heart; do not unteach them by your practice, what they have learned, from your instructions; do not teach them to light your words, by the unsuitableness of your ways to them.

For a conclusion of the whole, observe farther, these four general directions:

1. Be

1. Be Sincere.

2. Be Steady.

3. Be fruitful.

4. Be Stedfast.

I. In your whole course, and all the particular circumstances of it, be sincere. Sincerity is not a distinct grace, but notes the truth of every grace, and gracious action. There is a sincerity of,

Our State.

Our Actions.

1. There is a sincerity of our state. That notes the uprightness of our hearts in the main, and hath been already described, in the directions I have given, in the duty of self-examination.

2. There is a sincerity of our actions: This is two-fold, either such as respects particular and single actions, or the series of our actions, our whole course, 2 Cor. 11. 12. *This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our Conscience, that in all simplicity, and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the Grace of God we have had our Conversation in the world; in all simplicity and godly sincerity:* There is a natural sincerity, and a godly sincerity; natural sincerity, imports no more, but simplicity, or plain-heartedness, when there is no guile or deceit in any action, no purpose to deceive, no pretence of what is not intended; no Conscience of any evil in what we do, nor any evil intent in it. In this sense, God bears witness of *Abimelechs* integrity, Gen. 20. 6. Testifying concerning his taking *Abrahams* Wife, that he did it in the integrity of his heart, that is, he knew no evil in it: He knew not that she was another Mans Wife, nor intended any wrong to

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her Husband in it. Then there is also a godly sincerity; this supposes the sincerity of our state. He cannot have his conversation in godly sincerity, that is not first a godly man. It concludes in it, not only Truth, but Faith, and Love, and ingenuity to God; not only a good meaning, but a good will to the work, and to the Lord, for whose sake we do it.

To walk sincerely, is to walk both as in the sight of God, as the witness of our uprightness, to whom we dare to appeal, and in the *power of the Grace of God*, which carries us on to pursue his honour and interest. The *opposite* to this sincerity, is *fleshly wisdom*, or carnal policy, which models our Religion and the exercises thereof, in a consistency with, and subservency to our fleshly interests: And hypocrisie or dissimulation, to which it is most properly opposed. And there is a two-fold hypocrisie in our actions. Either total, that which denominates them hypocritical actions, Or tial, when though as to the main the heart be upright, and the action acceptable to God, yet there is some little mixture of deceit in it; which, though it be matter of humiliation to the doer, yet doth not wholly hinder the acceptance of what's done. As there is no person, so there is no action so perfectly sincere and upright with God, but there is some obliquities to be found in it.

Brethren, be upright in your way, be true to the Lord, not putting him off with eye-service, but serving him in singleness of heart; be ingenuous towards God; with good will, doing service; whatever good words you speak, whatever good duties

duties you perform, whatever good fruits you bring forth, let good will be at the bottom. Let not fleshly wisdom have any thing to do in the managing and ordering your *Spiritual waies*. You must be fools if you will be honest. *He that will be wise* (saith the Apostle) *let him be a fool*. So he that will be upright, let him lay down his fleshly wisdom. Let him not consult with Flesh and Blood, nor studie to cast himself into such a *mode*, or limit himself to such a measure of godlinesse, as will best secure and advance his earthlie concernments, but laying aside such *considerations*, let him follow the Lord in all things, whether it be right or wrong, as to matters outward and carnal.

Beware of Hypocrisie and dissimulation: be not mockers of God, Gal. 6. 7. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*, saith the Apostle. That is, either God cannot be mocked; there's no juggling with God; there's no deceiving of Gods Eye; when you have done all you can to varnish an empty or deceitful work, God cannot be deceived; his eye sees what it is. There's no dissembling with God, whatever there may be with men: Or else God will not be mocked; he will never be put off with, nor bear mocking services, *but as men sow, so shall they reap*. Look what their work is, such shall their reward and their wages be.

There is a twofold-mock:

1. *A Deriding Mock,*
2. *A Deluding Mock.*

There is a *deriding mock*, or a putting of scorn upon persons. The Enemies of *Jerusalem*, mocked at her Sabbaths; the Persecutors and Crucifiers of Christ, mocked him, and said, *Hail King of the Jews*.

And there is a *Deluding Mock*, or a putting a *Cheat* upon them, to deceive them. He that promises any thing that he doth not intend, he that doth any thing, or gives any thing, which is another thing than it appears to be, is a *Mocker*. *Thou hast mocked me these three times*, said *Delila* to *Sampson*, when he pretended to have told her all that was in his heart, and yet hat but *lyed* to her, *Judg. 16. 15*. He that refreshes the needie with good words onlie, *be filled, be warmed*; or Promises, *I will give, I will relieve you*, this is but *Mock-Charity*: He that paies his debts, or buyes his *Commodities* with brasse money instead of silver, this is but *mock Justice*, and he that worships God with tongue-worship, instead of heart-worship, this is but *mock Religion*.

Oh, how much, such *mocking of God*, are many *Professors of Religion* guilty of. There's nothing but words in their *Professions*; nothing but words in their *Prayers*; nothing but words in their *Confessions* and *Acknowledgments*. Their *Faith* is a *mock Faith*, and their *Repentance* is *mock Repentance*; their *Humility* is *mock Humility*; nay, their very *Alms* and *Benevolences*, wherewith those that received them, are refreshed and relieved, are in respect to God a *mock Charity*, *mock Alms*. Whatever there is done, there is nothing of the heart in it; there's no good will in all their good work, and where that's wanting, the Lord looks on all as nothing.

Oh, remember and bewail all your *Hypocrisies* and *Dissemblations*; you are apt to think,

at least would make others think, when you have been Praying, or Fasting, or keeping Sabbathis, or visiting the Sick, or relieving the oppressed, that you have been doing some great good services; when yet, it may be, you have been dissembling with the Lord in all, and had need to go pray again, not only, *Lord forgive us our sins*, our pride, or our covetousnesse, but *Lord forgive us our Prayers*; *Lord forgive us our Repentance*, our Fasting, our Sabbathis, our Sabbath-mockeries, our Prayer-Mockeries. Consider, brethren, what an high provocation this is: 'Tis no small sin to be mockers of men; but will a man mock God? *Mal. 3. 8. Will a man rob God?* saith the Lord. Though you dare to steal, and purloin one from the other, yet dare you be so highly impious and sacrilegious, as to rob God? *Ye have robbed me*, saith the Lord. You have not only robbed my Prophets and my Servants, but ye have robbed me. *Will a man rob God?* So, *Will a man mock God?* Seemeth it to you a small thing that you weary men, that you will weary my God also, saith he Prophet; Seemeth it a small thing to you to deal falsely with men, but will you deal falsely with God also?

Brethren, in all your waies observe the rule, *Do as you would be done by*. If you would not that the Lord should mock you, be you no longer Mockers of God. Do not put off the Lord with mock-duties, unlesse you will be content to be put off with mock-mercies, mock-comforts, with a mock-pardon, and a mock salvation.

Beloved, Let us bewail our Hypocrisie; Let us not only bewail and humbled under any
 B b 4 thing

thing we have offered up to God, wherein we have been hypocritical in toto, have done nothing else but plaid the hypocrites; but let us bewail all those lower degrees of hypocrisie, that have been mingled with the best of all our duties: blessed be God, that though we have been *too hypocritical*, yet we are no *Hypocrites*, blessed be God for any sincerity that he hath seen in us, but woe to us, and shame to us, that there hath been so much hypocrisie mingled with it. Oh, let us fear an hypocritical heart: Oh, let us watch against an Hypocritical heart, let us purge out all the remainders of this Pharisaical leaven.

Let there be truth in all we do, and as much as in us lies *nothing but truth*. Let us draw nigh to God with a *true heart*, Hebr. 10. Let us be *undisfiled or upright in the way of the Lord*, Psal. 119. 1. Let our *works be found perfect before him*. Let us love in truth, let us speak the truth in love, let all our paths be mercy and truth; Let our hearts be in every word, in every step of our lives, let the heart do all, let the heart pray, let the heart hear, let the heart give and lend, and forgive; Let the *grace of our hearts do all*; Let Faith pray, and Obedience hear, and Repentance celebrate our Fasts; Let wisdom guide, let Truth speak, let Mercy give, let Love forgive, let Patience bear, and Long-suffering forbear, let Temperance feed us, Humility cloath us, and integrity preserve us; Let Grace *do all*, and let God have all, let Pride have nothing, & Covetousness nothing, and Envie nothing; let Lust neither bear a part in our doings, nor eat any of the fruit of our doing. Let there be written on all we have or do, *Holiness to the Lord*.

Let

Let us be more desirous to be holy, than to be accounted so; to be merciful, and just, and humble, and patient, than to be accounted such; to have a good conscience in the sight of God, than to obtain a name amongst the best of men.

If we be not reckoned amongst the *ablest Christians*, for Gifts, for Parts and Endowments, let it content us that we are *Christians*. If we be not the most *skilful Christians*, if our fruits be not the fairest and most beautiful, yet let them be *fruits brought forth unto God*, the right fruit, sound fruit; If what we do be *weakly done*, yet let it be *honestly done*.

Let us be *Nathaniels*, *Israelites indeed in whom is no guile*. So plain-hearted, and single-hearted in all our ways, that though our Adversaries do, yet neither our God, nor our consciences may call us Hypocrites. Let us be able to appeal to God, as the witness of our integrity. *Lord thou knowest that I love thee, thou knowest that my heart is with thee*: Let us be able to commit our selves and our waies unto the Lord, as he that shall plead for us against all the slights, and censures of men: *My God shall plead my cause, my God shall answer for me*.

Brethren, Sincerity will give us boldnesse before the Lord: We shall be able to lift up our faces in his Presence, and look in his Face in peace, and he that can be bold with God, may be bold with all the world. He that can look God in the Face, may look his accusers in the face, his Despisers and Persecutors in the face; He that can freely appeal to God, can boldly appear before men. *The sinners in Sion are afraid, fearfulness surprizeth Hypocrites*.

Hypocrites: The sense of their guilt, and guilt side with every danger that they are in, strengthens every fear that comes upon them, makes their own hearts to fall upon themselves, puts a sting into every cross, starves them out of all their comforts. To God they dare not look, to Conscience they dare not remember, they are forsaken of all their supports, and left to shake and sink under every trouble that comes upon them. 'Tis innocency that hath boldness, dare to be upright and fear nothing. *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God accepteth thy works,*

II. *Be steady and even in all your goings.* Be not off and on, in and out, Prov. 4. 24, 26, 27. Prov. 23. 17. *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* Alone, in company, at home, abroad, in thy duties, in thy business, in thy recreations, all the day, and every day, let to morrow be as this day, and next day as to morrow: In this evenness and equality of our lives stand the beauty and comeliness of them, when all the several parts of them bear their due proportion each to other. Let your wayes be conform to the Canon, and let them be uniform: be like unto God, and then be ever like your selves, be unchangeable. We appear almost to many men as we live dales, or come into companies: We have more of the Moon than of the Sun, little light, but many changes and spots. Let not your conversation be so *checker'd*, let not Christians be *speckled birds*, let there not be so many black among your whites, sometimes something

thing of God, sometimes as much of the flesh. What a deformitie is it to a new Garment, to have here and there a companie of old rotten patches? Now a little of God, and then as much of the Devil; now serious in the Spirit, and then in the flesh, now serious and savourie, by and by frothie and vain; this hour in a Divine Rapture, and the next in a fleshly frolick; now a little of Godliness, and then a patch of sensualitie, Be Christians, and be ever your selves, do not change your Hearts with your Companie. Be not of those vain ones, who can cast themselves into any shape, can suite themselves to any Times or Companies. Who can weep with those that weep, and mourn with them that mourn, and pray with them that pray, and can also laugh, and be merry, and jolly with those that are so. Let all your goings be established, be ever in the fear of the Lord.

III. Be fruitful. That ground is counted fruitful which bringeth forth good Fruit, and which bringeth forth much Fruit. I have already directed you how to bring forth good Fruit, now let me presse you to see to it, that your Fruits do abound, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord.* Jam. 3. 17. *The wisdom which is from above is pure and peaceable, &c. and full of good fruit.* John 15. 18. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.* Rom. 6. 19. *As you have yeilded your members servants to uncleannesse, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to Righteousnesse unto Holinesse: You have been the servants of sin, be ye now the servants of Righteousnesse, and be ye*

ye as free, and as forward, and as fruitful in the service of righteousness, as ever you have been in the service of sin. You have added sin to sin, unrighteousness to uncleanness, iniquity to iniquity. A sin hath abounded and multiplied its fruits, so let grace also abound, and bring forth its fruits abundantly.

Let your lives be as much filled up with the works of righteousness, and mercie, and holiness, as they have been with the works of the flesh. Brethren, time was, when a little sin could not suffice you, a little sporting, a little pleasure would not serve your turn; you thought you would never have enough of the world, and the lusts and vanities of it; why, prove your selves, now to be as heartily the servants of Christ, as ever you were the servants of sin, by being fruitfully his, as ever you were fruitful to sin. If Christ be a better Master, and a better Pay-Master, let him have more and more cheerful services. Bring forth good fruits, and of all sorts. As it is said of the Tree of Life that stands in the City of God above, Rev. 22. 2. so let it be said of every living Tree that stands in the Vineyard of God here below. That they bring forth *in due manner*, that is, all manner of fruits; be fruitful in every good work, and bring forth fruit for every season. There are *summer fruits*, and there are *winter fruits*, that God expects from you. By summer fruits I mean, those that are most proper for the daies of your prosperity, as thankfulness, watchfulness, fear, humility, self-denial, mercy, compassion, &c. Your winter fruits are such as God looks for in the dayes of your affliction, fasting, repentance, mortification, humiliation,

affliction, submission, patience, &c. Brethren, be
 not only good summer servants, but winter ser-
 vants also, and when ever it is winter with you,
 all close to your Winter-work, be much in the
 exercise of repentance, godly sorrow, patience, &c.
 Let the persecuting World see, that godliness will
 not only live, but flourish too in the hardest Win-
 ter. The truth is, there is no such flourishing time
 for the Saints as the time of trouble: Gods trees
 usually bear best in Winter. The Winter frosts
 so ordinarily bring forth and ripen their fruit bet-
 ter than the Summers warmth. At least the hard
 Winter prepares for a fruitful Summer; Beloved,
 is it Winter with any of you? lose not this fructi-
 fying season, to your work, to your work. Let your
 work serve you in stead of fire to keep you warm.
 Let not the cold windes and storms chill and freeze
 your spirits, and so kill your fruits: let a fire be
 kindled and kept alive within you, the fire of love
 and holy zeal, I mean, let those winds not blow
 out, but blow up these fires; let them blow out
 the fire of lust, of passion, and contention, but let
 them blow up the fire of *love* and *zeal*, and let your
 inward warmth supply the want of outward com-
 forts and encouragements, for the cherishing and
 ripening of your fruit. Be either bringing forth
 fruit, or preparing for fruit, let not the Plough
 stand still, let the clods be broken, let the seed be
 cast in: If it be the day of your tears, sow in
 tears; it is good sowing in such a rainy day; and
 such a seed-time will bring forth a comfortable
 Harvest.

IV. *Be stedfast and unmovable*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. 'Be
 not moved, either from the hope of the Gospel,
 or

or from the *Obedience of the Gospel*. Be not Affrighted from Christ, let not the fear of the Cross make you weary of the yoke of Christ: Turn not back from the holy Commandment, for any Tribulation that may come upon you. Suffer not yourselves to be persecuted out of your Religion or conscience.

Tribulations are temptations, and will try what there is of God in you, what reality there is lying under all your professions, whether the Word of Christ hath taken any root in you: And such troubles will make the greatest Tryal of you; which fall upon you for righteousness sake.

There are some troubles that fall promiscuously on all, good and bad, and put no difference betwixt the one and the other, but as an overflowing flood, bear down all before them: As in general families, pestilences, and wars, in which it happens alike to the just and unjust, to him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

There are other troubles that fall only on the heritage of the Lord, on the best among a people. When the vile of the earth prosper and flourish, and those only in whom some good thing is found, are the suffering people. When the Sun shines on the barren Mountaines and miry Marishes, and the Storms, the Thunder, and the Hail fall only on the fruitful Fields; when the Corn is smitten, and only the Thorns and Bryars escape. Such troubles as fall on the Righteous of the earth, and for their righteousness sake; when the bread and water of affliction are given to Disciples, and in the name of Disciples, these are the most trying troubles. Such troubles

troubles as leave men to their choice; either to sit or suffer: When godliness becomes the common mode to tribulation, and ungodliness is the only door that is left open, by which we may escape and shift our selves out of danger. Such afflictions as these will make the most narrow search, and through tryal, whether we are godly indeed or not.

Brethren, see that your hearts be so established with grace, that you stand your ground, and keep your way in such dayes of temptation. And that you may hold out, and hold on, and abide in the day of greatest tryals, take this course.

1. *Try your selves thoroughly aforehand, 1 Cor. 11. 31. If we would judge our selves, we should not be judged: Though I cannot say, if we would try our selves, we should not be tryed, yet this I can say, if we would try our selves, we should be the more likely to abide the trial of the Lord. Try your selves afore-hand: And that,*

1. *What you are in the state of your souls, according to the instructions I have already given you in this matter.*

2. *What you are in your duties, in your alive obedience: He that is not faithful in doing the Will of God, is not like to be found faithful in suffering the Will of God. He that carries himself Christianly in his present state, needs not trouble himself with fears and doubts, how he shall stand in any future state he may be brought into.*

The tryal that trouble will make upon us is, whether we will be faithful in doing the Will
of

of God when we must suffer for it : Now he that neglects his duty, and cannot hold his heart to a holy conscientious course when he is in no danger, and his Religion is like to cost him nothing, what is like to become of this mans godliness when it may cost him the loss of all ? We read *Dan. 6. 10.* *When a decree was signed, That whosoever should ask any Petition of God, or man, save of the King, should be cast into the Lyons Den : That Daniel prayed, and gave thanks to his God three times a day (as he had done aforetime :) If Daniel had not used to pray aforetime, when praying would bring him into no danger, he would not doubtless have adventured on it in such a time, when he saw evidently that it was like to cost him his life.*

Brethren, Consider what your present course and care is : Do you pray now, and fast now, and withdrawing your selves from the lusts and liberties of the world ? Do you now apply your selves to a sober, serious, self-denying life ? Are you now active for God and your souls, and have you been conscientious, and watchful, and fruitful aforetime, when there was nothing to molest or discourage you ? If you have been carnal, and vain, and remiss in the exercises of Religion, when you might have been as holy as you would, as strict and as zealous as you would, without any fear of suffering for it : If you have wasted away your encouragements, and spent out your Sun-shine, in a careless unprofitable life, how do you think to be ever useful or serviceable in the dark ? If you cannot now bear the pains of a godly life, how do you think you should bear both the pains and the charges of it ? If you could follow Christ no closer in the plenty of all things,

things; how do you think to follow him, when it must be in hunger and thirst?

Dost thou talk of suffering for Christ, and suffering for Righteousness; and hopethou shalt never forsake him; whatever come upon thee, when thy heart tells thee; how much thou hast slighted Christ; neglected thy duty to Christ, contented thyself with a cold, heartlesse, luke-warm Profession; without the power of Christianity, and that when thou hast had no pretence of damage or danger that was hereby like to come upon thee? You that now can keep at distance from Christ, for the satisfying of a lust, have reason enough to fear that you will utterly forsake him, if ye be put to it, for the saving of your Life. You that in a calm can ordinarily remit your Religion, for the pleasing of a lazy heart; will be like enough to renounce your Religion in a storm, to quiet a fearful heart. He that can sell his Conscience for a Lust, will hardly be perswaded to buy it, with the losse of all that ever he is worth. Thou sayest, it may be, with Peter, *Though I dye with him, I will not deny him*: I, but dost thou deny thy self for him now, deny thy pleasures, and thy ease, and thy companions now? Hast thou not many a time denyed him a Prayer, or an Alms, when he hath called for it? Canst thou watch with Christ? Dost thou walk with Christ as thou oughtest? Dost thou live to Christ? Art thou faithful in bringing forth fruit unto Christ, the fruits of holinesse and righteousness? If not, how dost thou think to be able to suffer for him? If the way of Christ be too strait for thee, thou wilt find his burthen to be too heavy; if thou canst

not bear his yoke, thou wilt be less able to bear his Cross.

Christians, consider what your wayes and your doings are at present, and if you find the Lord helping you to walk in all good conscience now, you need not doubt of being enabled to witnesse for a good conscience when called to it. If you keep the Word, and do the work of the Lord, you may expect his help for bearing his burthen. If you be faithful in your lives, you are the more like to be faithful to the death. *Because thou hast kept the Word of my patience, I also will keep thee in the hour of temptation,* Rev. 3. 10.

2. *What you are in the ordinary and smaller crosses, that come daily upon you.* There is not that man that lives, that meets not with his crosses, which though they be, many of them, but light and inconsiderable things, below the Spirit of a Christian to take notice of, yet how sadly may we observe at what a loss they are presently by them. 'Every little Wind raiseth a storm'; every little cross puts us out of course. What breaches are often made upon our consciences, what interruptions of duties, what abatements of our comforts, to what distance are we put from Christ, and our holy communion with him, and all merely for a thing of nought. We cannot bear an unkindness from a Friend, or an injury from an Enemy, the provocation of an evil tongue, a scoffe, or a slander, but presently our spirits are in an uproar, and there are such tumults raised up within us, that for the time we forget that we are Christians; Duties, and Comforts, Christ and Conscience, Souls, and the matters of Eternity, and all regard to these

are laid aside, and turned out of doore; Faith and Patience, and Meekness, and Moderation, are either made to be silent, or at least cannot be heard, for the noise of our passions, and disquiets; and all this sometimes for such trivial things, that when we come to our selves, we are all quite ashamed of our selves.

Brethren, such fails by these lower temptations, I cannot wonder if they make our hearts shake at the fore-sight of greater. If every small party which the Adversary sends out against us, doth put us to the rout, How shall we stand, when he comes upon us with his full body? If we are overcome of the footmen, how shall we contend with the horse-men? If a rod, or a little finger doth so disturb us, how shall we bear the weight of the *loyns*, or the *stinging of Scorpions*? If we cannot bear an unkindnesse, or a nod, or a scoff, or a slander, what would become of us? Should we be brought to resist unto blood?

Beloved, it is of greater import to Christians than they are aware of, both to observe themselves daily, and their carriages in these lower things, and to inure themselves to patience, and meeknesse of spirit under them. Though it be no great vertue to be patient, where there is no great provocation, yet there may be great benefit by it. If we could but shame our selves out of this folly, and childishnesse of Spirit, whereby we are apt to be moved with every toy; if we could reason, and pray our selves into such a fixed calm and quietnesse of spirit, that we could keep our way, with the neglect of such disturbances, our lives would be both more comfortable and *honourable* at pre-

sent, and we should be in the better preparation for any harder things that might come upon us. If we know how to be Christians among briars and thorns, we shall be the better able to continue such among Spears and Arrows.

3. *What, you are under the temptation of prosperity.* The World is a Christians Enemy, it expresseth its enmity in its temptations; the end of all its temptations, is to draw us off from God. Its temptations are of two sorts, either of *prosperity* or *affliction*, and both driving at the same end, though in a different way.

Prosperity allures, entices, and flatters us away from God; it steals away our hearts from God, as *Absalom* stole the hearts of *Israel* from *David*, by fair speeches, by its fair and smiling face, thereby drawing us into a neglect and forgetfulness of God, to grow cold and remiss in our duty to God, to let fall our love and affection, and to lay aside our care of Religion.

Afflictions fright us from God, dealing by us as *Rabshakeh* by *Israel*; when he sought to get them off from *Hezekiah* by his threatnings and great words, *Isa. 36.* If you will not hearken to me, I will make you drink your own piss, and eat your own dung: Afflictions are apt to weary men out of the ways of God, to starve them out of their Religion, to persecute them out of their Consciences, and to make godliness too hot for them.

The stronger and the more dangerous of these two sorts of temptations, are held to be the temptations of prosperity; the World flatters more from Christ, than ever it can fright from him.

Now beloved, if you have stood your ground against the former of these temptations, you may with the more confidence encounter the latter: he that hath been *holy* in prosperity, will be *holy* in afflictions; he that knoweth how to *abound*, will the better know how to *want*; he that hath kept close to *God*, kept up his *affections*, kept on his *way*, against all the *snares* and *flatteries* of the *world*, his *Spirit* is not like to be sunk under its *frowns* and *threatnings*; The *God* that hath preserved you from being lull'd asleep by the warm *Sun*, will also preserve you from being withered by the scorching *Sun*.

II. *Mortifie the flesh with the lusts of it.* 'Tis corruption that makes affliction tedious and dangerous. Unmortified *lusts* will both make affliction to be the sharper, and also to be the greater temptation.

I. They will make afflictions to be the sharper and more painful. A *Christian* who hath two men in one, the *old man* and the *new*, hath two tender parts, which are apt to smart, and to be put to pain at every little thing that offends: his *Conscience* and his *Lust*: that which offends *Conscience*, and makes it smart, is *sin*; that which offends *Lust*, and puts it to pain, is *affliction*. If *Conscience* be grown dead, and benumb'd, *sin* never troubles, and if *Lust* be once dead, afflictions never trouble: kill your lusts, and you at once kill all your adversaries and afflictions.

What makes contempt and disgrace so tedious? Why, it is the pride of our hearts. What makes povertie and want so grievous, but the covetousnesse and greedinesse of our hearts: The

appetite will be quarrelling that it wants its dainties; the wanton mind will be vexed, that it's deprived of its gay cloaths, and rich attire; carnal fears, and worldly cares, come in with their vexations: kill these lusts, and you give present ease to your hearts; 'tis sin that makes sufferings smart:

2. They hereupon make afflictions to be the greater temptations: the more afflictions pain us, the more strongly do they perswade us, to take heed of that which brings them on us, and to comply with any thing that will give us ease or relief. Every pang and throb that comes upon us for godliness sake, will be clamouring and crying out against it, *away with it, away with it*: this professing, and praying, and precise walking, hath undone me; this Conscience hath broken my back, lost me my Estate, my Liberty, my Friends; bereft me of all my comforts, my credit, my quiet, and created all these fears, and sorrows, and vexations which are upon me. Will remitting my zeal, dispensing with Conscience, cast off care, make me whole, and save me all this harm and losse? why then shall I thus torment my self, when I have such a way open to escape all?

Brethren, would you be secure from such temptations? get your lusts slain, which put an edge upon them: Cut off all provision from the flesh, that would keep it in heart. Allow not your selves the liberty to live a sensual life, while you have opportunity; bring your selves under a voluntary restraint; abase your selves, before God hath the abasing of you; denie your selves, before God comes to denie you; put the bridle upon your appetites, before God come and puts bonds upon

them and you; restrain your selves of your delicacies before God come and shorten you; unclouth your selves of your wanton habits, before God hath the stripping of you; starve your lusts to death, that the Lord come not and storm them; let tribulations find their hard work done to their hand, and they will be more easie.

Get your hearts so low, that the contempt of men cannot bring you lower; that the *Spoilers* cannot make you poorer than your hearts have made you already; give all you have to God, your ease, and your pleasures, and your liberty, and your Estates; give away all you have from *lust* to God, and then you will be disquieted at whatsoever Messengers he sends to fetch it away.

When this is done, what hurt can tribulation do you? what temptation will it be unto you? You will then dare to follow the Lord against all the world; you will not fear your Religion will prejudice you; you will not fear losse; you have nothing to lose, all is given away already; you will not fear a Prison, your hearts have carried you thither already; you will not fear disgrace or contempt, your hearts have brought you so low, that the pride of men cannot lay you lower; you will not fear torments, when your flesh is dead, and can feel no pain.

III. Be convinced of the dreadfulness of Apostacy, and the misery of Apostates and Back-sliders. Remember *Lots Wife*; God hath left us many *Pillars of Salt* before our eies, to warn us to take heed of looking back.

Mat. 7. 27. *The fall of that House was great, that it was a dreadful and terrible fall; it was spoken*

ken of the house built upon the Sand, which when assaulted by the winds and floods of persecution, fell, because it had no foundation, and great or dreadful was the fall of it; a fall from an house to an heap.

Heb. 13. 38. *If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* Let him go, take him who will for me; take him World, take him Devil, for I regard him not. Thou maiest go whither thou wilt, that art gone from thy God; thou must look to thy self, and shift for thy self as thou canst, God hath no further favour for thee; his soul is loosed from thee.

Rev. 16. 15. *Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments: (that keepeth his garments) that is, that keepeth his Faith, his Conscience, his Religion, his holy profession, wherewith he is cloathed; that keepeth them clean, ne pollutur, that hath not defiled his garments; that keepeth them safe, ne cripiantur, that hath not lost his garments; that hath neither defiled his Profession, nor lost his Religion and Conscience; he is a blessed man, Revel. 2. and chap. 3. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, of the hidden Manna; to sit with me on the Throne. To him that overcometh, that is, that holds out to the end. Hold out, and you overcome, overcome, and you shall reign; overcome and you shall eat of the Tree of Life, and hidden Manna.*

Now brethren, if a blessing be the portion of him that keeps his Garments, keeps his Faith, and keeps his Conscience, what shall be his Portion that hath lost all, and thrown off all

He that hath lost his *holy garments* hath woven to himself a *cloathing of curses*, not of blessings; If he only that overcomes shall sit on the Throne, shall eat of the Tree of Life, then what shall he eat, or where must he sit that is overcome? He shall eat the fruit of his own doings, of his lyes, and hypocrisie, and dissembling, he shall feed upon death and wrath; death shall feed upon him, and he shall have nothing else to feed upon, there is meat for him to eat, and a place prepared for him, such as it is; his place shall not be on the Throne, but under the Foot-stool.

Now put all this together, and you may see the woful state of Apostate Professors, they are *Messengers of Vengeance*: Though they have lost their *savour*, yet they will serve for *Pillars of Salt*; a standing dread, and terror, and warning to others, on whose foreheads is written, *Let him that thinks he standeth take heed lest he fall*. They are clothed with curses, must feed upon fire, and have their dwelling under the foot-stool in scorn and everlasting contempt.

Apostates are the worst of men, Those that have lost their Religion, have lost by their Religion, 1 Pet. 2. 21. *Better had it been for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than having known, to turn from the holy Commandment*. Religion, which is a wing to Saints, whereby they rise up into Glory, is become a weight to hypocrites, to sink them so much the deeper in wrath. Apostates are in the worst case of all men.

1. They are the worst in Gods account. The Lord hath a double quarrel with them, not only for being found under the *Enemies* colours, but that ever such

such varlets should have marched under his colours : A quarrel with them for their Profession, for their Prayers, *wherein they have but abused his Name and Gospel* : God and his waies have suffered from none so much as from Renegado disciples.

2. They are the worst in the account of men, both good men and evil men : there are none that can speak well of Renegado's ; they are the sorrow of Saints, and the sport of sinners, good mens shame, and evil mens scorn, and the hate of all.

3. But especially they are the worst and most miserable of men, considered in themselves, they have not only *lost* their Religion, but they have *arm'd* it against themselves. All the profession and prayers that they have made, together with all the hopes, and joys, and comforts that once seemed to grow up out of them ; the remembrance of them (I mean, when ever they come to remember themselves) will be as many darts in their livers, and stings in their hearts. All their hopes, and joys, and comforts have *given up the Ghost*, and these ghosts *do haunt them* and torment them with such thoughts as these.

Wretched creature that I am, where am I? what an exchange have I made? Light for darkness, Wisdom or folly, Righteousness for wickedness, Gain for godliness, Conscience for credit, Heaven for hell!

I was once, as I thought, in the way of Life, and I had *hopes* I should have seen life ; I made *profession* of Religion, and took pleasure in Religion ; I walked after the Lord, and the thoughts of God were precious to me ; I found comfort in Christ, I took sweet counsel with the Saints, and went to

the house of God with them in company. Sabbaths were a delight, Ordinances were a refreshing to me; I have tasted of the good *Word of God*, and the powers of the World to come; and whilst it was thus with me, I had great peace, and was full of hopes that I should once see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the living.

But wo is me, where am I now? How hath my treacherous heart, that I never suspected, turned me aside from God, and spoiled me of all my hopes and comforts? I must now bid adieu to all: farewell Profession, farewell Religion; farewell Conscience; farewell Duties, Sabbaths, Ordinances, Saints, the sweet delights I took in them; farewell Joyes and Hopes for ever. Welcome Drunkards, Swearers, Lyars, welcome Turk, or Pope, or Devil, I must now be of your side, and take up my lot with you for ever. Oh whither am I fallen? Study well the misery of such persons, and let that be a warning to you.

IV. *Be Circumpect.* See that you do not unnecessarily pull sufferings on your selves, especially look to it, that you *suffer not as evil doers*. If your sin lead you into sufferings, God may leave you in them, and then what is like to become of you?

There is a suffering for our faults, there is a suffering for our righteousness, without our fault, and there is a suffering for our righteousness through our fault. We sometimes run our selves upon trouble when we need not: as when by our unwary and imprudent managing and ordering our selves in some duties, we lay our selves open to those sufferings, which a little prudence might have prevented. We must be wise as well as innocents. Christians should

should never ordinarily expose themselves to suffering, till God hath so hedg'd up all lawful waies of escape, that they must either suffer or sin.

Be so wary in your course, that you may not faintly suffer for the good that is in you; but especially see to it, that you suffer not as evil-doers, and for the evil that is found in you; to this end be careful.

1. That you speak not, nor do any thing in the matters of Religion rashly. 'Twas good counsel which the Town-Clark gave the *Ephesians*, when they were in a tumult and uproar about their Goddess *Diana*, Acts 19. 36. Seeing that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. Christians should be considerate and well advised in what they speak or do, should mark and weigh their words and actions themselves, which they know will be so narrowly observed and weighed by others.

2. That you speak not, nor do, nor refuse to do any thing obstinately, or out of stomach, or animosity. Let your wayes be guided, not by passion, or a spirit of contradiction, but by conscience and meekness of spirit: be not self-willed, let nothing be done through strife, &c. Phil. 2. 3. Be steadfast, but not stubborn; be faithful, but not wilful; be zealous, but not contentious.

3. That you neither do nor suffer any thing out of pride or vain-glory; as the Apostle exhorts, Phil. 2. 3. Do nothing, so suffer nothing out of strife or vain glory. Take heed that an affectation of popular applause, of gaining the repute of active Christians, of bold and resolved Christians, be not it that leads you on. Your pride may cost you much, but will never bear your charge, may bring you into trouble, but will never bear you out.

4. That

4. That you do nothing *ignorantly*, or upon mistake. Be *clear*, especially in those things which may be costly. Study your duty thoroughly, labour to see *your way* plain before you; to see the pillar of fire and of the cloud going before you: Give heed to the word of the Scriptures, which is a *light to your feet*, and a *Lantern to your steps*: Where you are clear you will be bold; but take heed of suffering upon a mistake. Your troubles will be like to open your eyes, and shew *your* mistake, and thereby put out *your* lights, destroy your supports and comforts.

5. Do not suffer unpeaceably. Suffer not for unpeaceableness, and suffer not unpeaceably; be patient and you will be peaceable.

Brethren, see that you be thus well advised, meek, humble, peaceable, and clear in the grounds of your sufferings: And then,

V. *Be resolute. Be sure you stand on good ground*, and then resolve to *stand your ground* against all the world. Follow God, and fear not men. Art thou godly? repent not, whatsoever thy Religion cost thee; let sinners repent, but let not Saints repent; let Saints repent of their faults, but not of their *faith*, of their *iniquities*, but not of their Righteousness. The *Psalmist*, as holy a man as he was, was almost brought to it, his feet were almost gone, he began to say, when he considered the prosperity of the wicked, and his own afflictions, *Psal. 73. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency.*

Look to your selves you that stand, and take heed lest you fall: You that stand in integrity, take heed lest you fall *away by your Repentance.*

Repent

Repent not of your righteousness, lest you afterward repent of your repentance. Repent not of your righteousness, no, nor of your zeal; or your forwardness, or activity, in the holy wayes of the Lord. Your *zeal*, it may be, hath put you in the front of the *Battel*, where you receive the first and hottest charge of your enemies reproaches and persecutions, when others that have kept themselves more close, and been more remiss, or hid in the crowd, and more out of *gun-shot*, yet with not yourselves a step farther back, or a cubit lower in your stature in the Grace of God: Wish not any thing *undone*, concerning which, God will say, *well done*.

Repent not, and remit not of your zeal; think not of a retreat. Do not as the King of Israel, hide your selves under a disguise; feign not your selves to be worse, in hope to escape the better; the arrow may find you, though you be hid from the eye. Let not any of you that have been confessors of Christ, return to be only his midnight disciples.

For sake not the Lord till you can find a better Captain, that is, till God cease to be God, till the Lord say, shift for thy self, *there is no help for thee in thy God*: Retreat not from holiness till you are sure you can retreat without loss. Be not false to Religion, till you find it false to you. If ever Godliness leave you in the lurch, renounce it and spare not. If ever Religion cost you more than it is worth, throw it off as you will.

Christians, know when you are well, and hold your own, be not betrayed out of your refuge. If you must suffer, suffer for that which will pay you your charges; suffer not for your sins, but for your Religion; suffer not for the shadow or name, but for

substance of Religion. If any thing in the world will save you harmless in your sufferings, and quit the cost of all your expences, it is *substantial goodness*. If there be any *Stigmata Landis*, they are the marks which we bear in our bodies of the Lord Jesus. If there be any shame that hath a glory in it, it is the *approach of Christ*, and the shame that you suffer for his Name. If there be any *Cross* that is a *Crown*, it is the *Cross of Christ*: If there be any *Cross* that can be undoubtedly called the *Cross of Christ*, it is the *only Cross*, or sufferings for holinesse. Those *Martyrs* that suffered under the Popish tyranny, for witnessing against the *abomination* of the Mass, with the rest of their Idolatries and Superstitions, had not a more clear and glorious Cause and Crown than thou hast, who sufferest for the power of Holinesse.

If there be any thing in the *World* which God owns, and wherein his honour is nearly conceen'd, it is *holinesse*. If ever the Devil shewed himself a *Devil*, it is in his *opposing holinesse*; if ever he shewed himself a *Devil in print*, it is in those books of *reproaches* and *scoffs* that are written against *purity*; if ever he shewed himself a *Devil in grain*, it is when his hands have been dyed with the *blood of saints*.

Brethren, if you will resist the *Devil*, if you will be on the *Lords side*, be on the side of *Holinesse*. If you will stand to any thing, if you will not be whirling, inconsistent, shaken reeds, tossed up and down with every Wind, if you will fix any where, fix here, upon *substantial godlinesse*.

This is the great controversie betwixt Heaven and Hell, betwixt the seed of the Woman and the Serpent,

Serpent, betwixt the professing and profane world, about the substance and power of *godliness*; some quarrels and contests there are about the shadows and appendants of *Religion*, matter meerly circumstantial: but whatever noise there be made about such things as these, the bottom of the controversy lyes deeper; it is about the body of *Religion*, and not the skirts of its garments: it is he that will live godly in Christ Jesus; that doth and must suffer persecution.

Art thou godly? Fix here, and let this be thy resolution: I live in a World of quarrels and contentions, *contentions* about shadows and circumstances; but for such things as these, though I will not defile my self by complying in my practise, with what Conscience complies not, yet I list not to be contentious, nor to perplex my self or others about them. But by the grace of God, whilst God is a God of holiness, whilst holiness is the image and Interest of God, whilst these words of the Lord, *Be ye holy, follow holiness, live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present World*, whilst these, and the like words of the Lord, stand un-repeal'd, by the Grace of God I will be a Friend, an Advocate, a Confessor, a practitioner of Holiness to the end of my days. This is my resolution, and in this resolution I commit my self to God, and so come on me what will,

F I N I S.

PHIL. 4. 9.

*Those things which you have both learned,
and received, and heard, and seen in me,
do, & the God of Peace shall be with you.*

WHat the particular Reason of my choice of this Scripture this day is, if you compare my present station, with the intent of the Apostle, in these words, you will easily understand.

These words of the Apostle, being part of the close of his *Epistle* to the *Philipians*, are his *Valediction*, or *Farewel* to them. It is not unknown to you that I must now be parted from you; and I have pitched on this Scripture, to be the Close of my Twenty Years Ministry among you.

God hath sent me among you to be a *Builder*, and I have chosen this Text to be an *Hammer* to fasten, and drive home those Nails of Instruction and Consolation, which I have been so long endeavouring to enter into you.

God hath sent me among you as a *Fisherman*; and I have chosen these words to be as the *closing of the Net*. Behold, once more the Net is spread, and I am now making my last Draught; and oh that

it might have the same good speed, as *Paul*'s last hour,
Luke 5. 6. It would then pay the Charges, though
the Net break.

God hath sent me among you as an *Husbandman*,
to plow and to sow ; and I am now come to cover
what hath been sown.

What is my aim in Preaching, let be yours in
Hearing : Oh that both *Preacher* and *Hearers* might
heartily joyn in this Desire ! This once more, *God*
speed the Plow.

In this Desire and hope I drive on.

In the Text observe,

{ A Precept,
A Promise,
An Enail of the Promise on the Precept.

In the *Precept* we have,

1. An Act ; [*Do.*]
2. An Object ; [*The things that ye have learned, received, heard, and seen.*]

The *Promise* is in these words, [*The God of Peace shall be with you,*]

The *Enail* of the *Promise* on the *Precept*, you have
in the *Connective Particle* [*And*] which knits
them up together. Do the Work, and have the Re-
ward ; Obey the Precept, and enjoy the Promise ;
Do what you have received and heard, and the God of
Peace shall be with you. Be careful of the former, and
be not careful about the latter ; If the *Precept* be
performed, the *Promise* shall be made good.

Doct. 1. Christians must be *Learners* before they
can be *Doers* [*What you have learned, that do.*]

Doct. 2. He hath learned well, that hath learned
to do well.

Christians Eyes, as well as their Ears may help them on in Religion: Or, The Holy Examples of Ministers, should be living Sermons to people: [*What you have seen in me*] Therefore the Apostle exhorts, *Phil. 3. 17. Mark them which so walk, as you have us for an example;* and *1 Cor. 11. 1. Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ*; that is, either, I have been a Follower of Christ, be ye therefore Followers of me; or else, Be ye Followers of me, as far forth as I have been a follower of Christ. Those Ministers may go off the Stage with Honour and Comfort, who have left behind them the good Seed of sound Doctrine, and the good favour of an Holy Example.

For mine own part, what my Doctrine and manner of life hath been among you, you are witnesses, and God also. And however, I have great reason to judge and condemn my self before the Lord, and to bewail it, that my Conversation hath been less exemplary and useful, than oh that it had been! yet I go off from you with this *Testimony* upon my heart, that I have not been of those who bind heavy Burthens, and lay them on other mens shoulders, but will not touch them with one of their fingers; but my endeavour hath been, to press on mine own Soul, and to hold out in my own practice, that Word of Life which I have preached to you; and therefore am bold, in this sence, to exhort you in the words of the Apostle, *Be ye followers of me, as far forth as you have seen me a follower of Christ.*

Dolt. 4. Godly Ministers, when they are parting from their People, would fain leave God behind them. Though it be not unusual, when the Lord sends them away, he goes with them; God and his Mes-

sengers, do not seldome take their leave
together; yet their earnest desire is, that though
they must away, yet the Lord would stay.

Doct. 5. Faithful Ministers would be *Messengers*
of Peace, going, as well as coming.

As the Apostles first words were to be, *Peace be*
unto you, Math. 10. Yet some of this Apostles last
words were, *The God of peace shall be with you*.

Doct. 6. When-ever Ministers part with their
People, if they can but leave Godliness in them,
they shall certainly leave God with them. Or,

Those that obey the Gospel, whatsoever, or
whomsoever they want, shall ever be in a peaceful
and blessed condition.

These things do, that is, live in the practice and
power of that Doctrine of Godliness, which you have
received, and heard; and then fear not, the God of
Peace shall be with you.

This Doctrine I shall fully prove to you, after I
have premised,

That the Doctrine which I have preached to you,
is the *Doctrine of Godliness*; the sum whereof take in
these four particulars:

1. That Jesus Christ, who came into the *World*
to save sinners, came also to sanctifie and purge them
from their sins.

2. That those that believe in Jesus, must be care-
ful to maintain good works; or to live a *Godly*
Life.

3. That this Godliness is not such a slight and
easie, and empty thing, as the mistaken *World* ima-
gine; but stands in an exact conformity of the
whole Man, *Heart*, and *Life*, to the whole *Vill* of
God.

4. That

That is whoſoever believe not in Jeſus, ſo whoſoever is ſhort of this true ſincere Godlineſſe, cannot be ſaved.

This is the ſumme of that Doctrin which I have preached unto you ; which being the eternal Truth of God, I herein imbarque my own Soul and Life, deſiring to be found in that ſame Jeſus, and to be found walking in that ſame way of Righteouſneſſe, which I have declared unto you.

2. That my Deſign and Aim, in preaching this Doctrin to you, hath been to beget in you, and through the influence and aſſiſtance of the Eternal Spirit, to bring you to this true Godlineſſe. I have travelled in birth with you, that Chriſt might be formed in you ; that I might leave you poſſeſſors and partakers of that Grace which accompanieth Salvation ; that your Faith might ſtand, not in the VViſdome of men, but in the power of God ; That your Repentance might be Repentance unto Life, not to be repented of ; that you might obey from the heart that Form of Doctrin that hath been delivered unto you ; that you might ſtand compleat in all the VVill of God ; that you might be holy and harmleſſe, the Children of God without rebuke, in the miſt of a crooked Generation, amongſt whom you muſt ſhine as Lights in the VVorld, holding forth the VVord of Life ; that being rooted and grounded in love, you might comprehend with all Saints, what is the height and depth, and length, and breadth, and might know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulneſſe of God : To this end have I taught every one, and warned every one, that I might preſent you perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.

3. That as far forth as the success hath answered my Design and aim upon any of your Souls, so far forth stand you entitl'd to this glorious Promise in the Text, *The God of peace shall be with you.* Look how many Souls there are amongst you that live in the power and obedience of those Truths you have received; so so many can I with confidence give this Farewel of the Apostles, without Ifs or Ands, *the God of peace shall be with you.* To whomsoever the Lord hath been a God of Grace, to them will he be a God of Peace. Whoever amongst you have this God of Grace dwelling and ruling in you, shall certainly find this God of peace dwelling and abiding with you: As for all others, though I can heartily make this my parting prayer, *The Lord be with you, the God of peace be with you;* yet I cannot turn this prayer into a Promise, nor give you any assurance, that the God of Peace will be with you.

These things premised, I shall now give you the full proof of the Doctrine in the following Reasons. The Doctrine you remember is, *Those that obey the Gospel, whatsoever, or whomsoever they want, shall ever be in a peaceful and blessed Condition.*

The Reasons are,

1. The God of peace shall be with them.
2. If God be with them, all things whatsoever befall them, shall make for their good.

Reas. 1. The God of Peace shall be with them; these things do, live in the obedience of the holy Doctrine which you have received, and the God of Peace shall be with you. This glorious Promise is pregnant with all the blessings that Heaven and Earth can afford.

If you ask, why, what is there in it? I demand
of

of you, What is there in God? God is in the Promise, all that is in God, is here assured to the Godly. The *Philosophers* of old attained to some glimmerings of the excellencies that are in God, by these 3. wayes.

1. *Per viam Negationis*, conceiving of him as a Being, removed from all things, signifying imperfection: as ignorance, impotence, iniquity, corruptibility, composition, alteration, or any limits or bounds of this Essence, Power and Glory.

2. *Per viam causalitatis*, conceiving of him, as the Fountain of all other Beings; and thence concluding, that whatsoever Excellencies, or perfections are scattered up and down in the whole Creation, are all united in him, from whom they had their Originall.

3. *Per viam eminentia*, by way of Excellency; so that whatever perfections, whatever goodness is to be found in any Creature, though it be not to be found in God, *formaliter*, yet there is that in him (he being the first cause of all) that doth infinitely, superabundantly answer them all. Though there be not the same Specifick Excellencies in him, nor those very pleasures and delights issuing from him, which the creatures yield; yet there are such Excellencies, such perfections as transcend and surpasse them all.

The Scripture tells us more positively, and plainly; that God is Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Infinite, Eternal, Unchangeable, All-sufficient, Holy, Righteous, Gracious; the Portion, the Protection, the Rewarder, yea the exceeding great Reward of them that diligently seek him. And this is he, that is in the promise, God is in the promise. I must not enlarge in this spacious Field; I shall keep nearer the Text, and shall confine my

self to these four particulars.

1. God is in the Promise as the *God of Peace*, as the Authour and bestower of Peace. The greatest of Blessings, is the Blessing of Peace, Peace hath all blessings included in it. It hath possession, fruition, and security; it hath plenty, pleasure and safety: where there's no peace, there's no security for the holding, nor opportunity of enjoying what we have. Whatever we have, we have it as if we had it not. Peace is the greatest of Blessings.

Peace with God is the most glorious of Peace. What is there that's excellent, what is there that's desirable, that is not comprehended in this Peace with God? Where there's Peace, there's *Pardon*: guilt cannot consist with this Peace; *being justified by Faith, we have peace with God*. Where there's Peace there's *Grace*; and holiness: *there's no Peace saith my God, to the wicked*. Where there's Peace there's *Love*, and good will. As love, so peace is the union no lesse then this; the Almighty God bears you good will. These two, peace and good will, are *Twins: On earth peace, good will towards men*. Where there's peace, there's *life*, everlasting life; Internal, is the seed of eternal peace.

This peace is a *Portion*; peace with God is our possession of the *God of Peace*. This Peace is a *Sanctuary*; if the *God of Peace* be with us, the *Peace of God* will keep our hearts.

Christians, in the World you must have trouble; I suppose you have, yet in him you shall have peace, who hath overcome the World, Isa. 26. 5. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace* (in peace, peace, as 'tis in the Original.) *whose mind is stayed on thee*. Psa.

1. I will hear what the Lord God will speak; he will speak peace to the People, and to his Saints. What a clattering is there in the World? what tumults, and commotions are raised about the followers of Christ, as if the World were falling about their ears? The Devil speaks wrath, evil men speak death; and bonds to them; breathing out threatnings, reproaches, persecutions against them. In the midst of all this fearful noise, I'll hearken, saith the Psalmist, what the Lord God will speak. Whatsoever men or Devils speak, I'll hearken if the Lord God speak at the same rate. Oh no, he will speak peace to his Saints: Let the Sons of contention do what they can, the Sons of God shall be the Sons of Peace; they shall live in peace, they shall dye in peace, they shall dwell in peace for ever, *Isa. 32. 17, 18. The Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the effect of Righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever. And my People shall dwell in a peaceable Habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places: Oh how great is the peace that they have who love thy Law.* Christians fear not to follow God: let not that sad word, nor the fulfilling of it, scare you out of your duty, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution.* What if they do? whilst you are able to say, I am persecuted, but I have peace; I am poor, but I have peace; In a Prison, but I have peace; in a Wilderness, but I have peace; though all the World be against me, God is at peace, my Soul is in peace; what discouragement should all that be to you?

2. He that is the God of peace, is the God of power. He promises peace, and he promises no more than he can perform. He can create peace, he can make

make their enemies to be at peace with them. He can make a league for them, with the Beasts of the field ; with the Lions, with the Wolves, with the most brutish among the people. He can say to the proud Winds and Waves, peace, be still, and they obey him. He can give them rest [from] the dayes of aduersitie : he can give them rest [in] the dayes of aduersity : he can give his Beloved sleep, upon the points of Swords and Spears.

3. He that is the God of peace, is the *God of patience*. This is my great fear, that though God gives, yet I shall break my peace ; The God of peace with me ? oh ! this is he whom I dishonour, and disoblige daily ; by my distrusts, discontents, impatiencies, murmurings, and what peace to such an heart ? what peace, so long as such unbelief, so much iniquity, as I find daily within me, remaines upon me ? Will he, with whom no iniquity can dwell, dwell in that heart, where there is so much iniquity, by which he is provoked every day ! but he that is the God of peace is also the God of patience ; who though he will not bear the iniquities of his adversaries, yet he will bear much with the infirmities of his People. *Psal. 89. 30. &c. If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgements ; if they breake my Statutes, and keep not my Commandements ; then will I visit their transgressions with a Rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*

4. He that is the God of peace, is the *God of hope*. I have not peace in possession, whatever there be in the promise. I live in the fire, am born a man of contention. What likelihood is there, that I should ever live to see a good day ? my comforts are broken, my Estate is lost, my libertie is gone ;
friends

For I have none, enemies I have many, and mighty, I dwell in *Mesech*, I have my habitation in the Tents of *Kedar* ; I am for peace, they are for War : whither ever I look, round about me, before me, behind me, on the right hand, or on the left, all speaks trouble and terrour to me. I have no peace ; What, nor no hope of peace neither ? where is thy God man ? hast thou a God in thee, and yet no hope in thee ? the God of peace, and yet no peace ! the God of hope, and yet no hope ! the God of hope will yet fill thee with joy and peace in believing, Rom. 15. 13. Why art thou cast down oh my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my Countenance, and my God, Psal. 43. 11. The God of hope will open a Window of hope in the darkest times, a door of hope in the most desperate cases. The God of hope will bear up the spirits of his Saints, in hope against hope ; and this hope will never disappoint them. It shall never be said, there is no peace, there is no hope, till it can be said, there is no God in *Israel*.

But how, or in what sence, is it to be understood, that this God of peace will be with us.

I answer in three particulars.

1. The heart of God will be with you. *Joseph's* blessing, the good will of him that dwelt in the Bush, will be thy portion, *Dent.* 33. What was the Bush ? the Church, or *Israel* of God. What case was the Bush in ? 'twas all in a light fire, 'twas all in a flame. Who was it that dwelt in the Bush ? God was in the Bush ; and that kept it from consuming, though not from burning. The good will of this God shall be with thee : his love, his favour, his care. I love them that love me, *Prov.* 8. 17. The Lord loveth the Righteous

(C. 11)
Righteous, Psal. 146. 8. The Love of God is the
womb of all good. Hence sprang the morning Star,
from the love of God came the Son of God: hence
came that womb of the Morning, the blessed Gospel
which is so big with glorious grace; with Light,
Life, Pardon, Peace, Glory, Immortality; from the
love of God came the glorious Gospel of God. *The*
upper Springs, all spiritual and heavenly blessings;
the *nether springs*, all earthly and outward blessings
do all rise, and bubble up out of this Fountain, the
love of God. *The precious things of Heaven*, the pre-
cious fruits brought forth by the Sun: the precious
Fruits put forth by the Moon; the chief things of the
ancient Mountains, the precious things of the lasting
Hills; the precious things of the Earth, and the ful-
ness thereof: All these flow in with the good will of
him that dwelt in the Bush.

Love is all; the Apostle tells us, Rom. 13. our
love to God is the fulfilling of the Law; that is, it
will bring forth all that to God, all that duty, and
obedience, which the Law requires. I may tell you,
that Gods love to us, is the fulfilling of the Gospel:
that is, it will powre down all that upon us, it will do
all that for us, which the Gospel promises. Look over
the whole Gospel; read, and study every precious
leaf, and line of that blessed Book: and if there be
enough in all that to make thee blessed, and to en-
courage thee on in thy holy course, all this is thine.
Thou hast that love of God with thee, which will
fulfil the Gospel: there shall not one jot or tittle fail
thee, of all that the Gospel promises. *The zeal of*
the Lord of Hosts will perform this, Isa. 9. 7.

2. The help of God will be with you, the Lord
will be your helper in the day of your distresse.

Heb.

He hath said, *I will not leave thee* : So that we may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* He hath said, *I will not leave thee* : and therefore we may say, *I will not fear* : He hath said, *I will be* : and therefore we may boldly say, *the Lord is my Helper* : He hath said, he will not forsake, he will help ; and who is he that shall say, *There is no help for thee in thy God.*

There's no man, whose Case may not be so desperate, as to be above all humane help. If he should cry out, as the woman to the King of Israel, *Help O King* ; the King must answer, *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee ?* If he should cry out, *Help O Man of God* : the Man of God must answer, *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee ?* If he cry out, *Help O my Friends*, my Wit, my Policy, my Purse ; all these must answer, *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall we help thee ?* But what case is there, wherein an [*Help Lord*] will not do ?

Foolish men count their case desperate, when they come to their [*God help*] that's an usual expression, to set forth the extremitie and helplessness of any mans case. When we see men even lost in any misery, and their case even utterly hopeless, then to signifie our sense of such mens lost condition, we cry out, *God help that man*, *God help that woman* ; they are lost Creatures. I, but if men did understand and consider what the help of the Lord is, they would see there could be no case so desperate, but an *Help Lord*, might recover all : *1 Sam. 30. 6.* when *David* was greatly distressed, and all was gone, *He encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*

Consider

Consider here two things.

1. What his Case then was ; he was in great distress ; he had lost all that ever he had ; his spoyle that he had taken were all gone, his Corn, and his Cattel, his Wives, and his City were all lost ; he had not an habitation in all the World ; he had nothing left him but a poor Army, and these were worse than lost, they were even ready to fall upon him : *The people spake of stoning him, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*

2. What the event hereupon was ; why God help'd him to all he had again : vers. 19. *There was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons, nor daughters ; neither spoyle, nor anything they had taken, David recovered all.*

Hence note,

1. That a Christian, when he hath lost all, hath yet a God to go to at last.

2. Whilest a Christian hath a God to go to, his case is never desperate ; let him but encourage himself in his God, and all will be recovered.

Sinners, triumph not over the poor people of God ; when they are at their worst, when they are brought as low as your Pride and malice can lay them ; though they should be stript naked, and left destitute of all their comforts, though all the World should ride on their backs, and tread on their necks, yet rejoyce not against them : though they fall, they shall arise, when they are at their worst, there's still help for them in their God.

3. The Presence of the Lord shall be with them. Whither soever they may be scattered, they shall not be scattered from their God. That Promise made to Moses, *Exod. 33. 14. My presence shall go with*

belongs to all the *Israel* of God. [*My presence*] in the Original 'tis *my face* ; in the Septuagint, *my self shall go with thee*.

The presence of God is either,
General, or
Special.

By his general presence, he is every where :

1. *Per Essentiam*, he fills all things.
2. *Per Cognitionem*, he beholds all things.
3. *Per Sustentationem*, he upholds all things.
4. *Per Dominium*, he governs all things.

But to let this pass as not so proper to our purpose.

2. There is his *Special* or his gracious Presence, whereby he manifests himself to be with his people.

1. In some *visible and standing tokens* of his presence ; as in those extraordinary, the Pillars of the Cloud, and of the Fire : and in those ordinary, the Ark and the Temple, of old, and the Ordinances of the Gospel now.

2. In some *inward influences*, and irradiations, upon the hearts of his people.

3. In some *visible and signall effects* of this presence, whereof there are very many. There are, amongst others, these two notable effects of Gods gracious presence ; which his People, by vertue of this Promise, may with confidence expect,

§ Conduction,

§ Covering :

they shall be *Led* in their way, and they shall be *Hid* in their way.

1. *Conduction* ; The Lord will be with them, to lead them and guide them in the way that they should go. *Psal. 25. 9, 12. The Meek will he guide in*

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in Judgement, the meek will be taught. *Psalm* 107. 7. *He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a City of habitation, Psalm* 5. 8. *Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine Enemies, make thy way straight before my face.*

The Lord leads his people in their way, chiefly by his Word, which is a Light to their feet, and a Lanthorn to their paths : And sometimes also by his Providences, hedging up all by-ways, and leaving but one way open to them, that hath the least appearance of the way of God. So ordering the matter that any other way that is before them, looks with too foul a face, to leave any doubt upon them, whether that be the way of God or not.

It's never uncomfortable to the people of God, while they see their way before them : Doubts about their way, are more perplexing, than dangers in their way. When they know what God would have them do, they can chearfully trust in him for any thing they are like to suffer. Dost thou meet with Wolves or Lions in thy way ? thou maist blesse God 'tis there thou meetest them, 'twould be ill meeting them else-where.

2. *Covering or Protection in their way, Psalm* 31. 20. *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence, from the pride of man ; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues.* [Thou shalt hide them in thy presence] or face ; thy light shall be their dark place to cover them : *Thou art my hiding place, Psalm* 32. 7. [In the secret of thy presence] the Saints hiding place is a secret : Such, where neither the pride of man can find them, nor can they understand what it is. Reproaches shall not find them, persecutions shall not find them, whose Souls are hid

hid in God ; they are not found, when they are
 found ; they are hid when they seem to lye most
 open, and most exposed to mens will, and lust.
 Sinners do not understand what refuge the Saints
 have in God. It is a great secret, a Myſtery to them:
 as the joy of the Saints, the comforts of the Saints,
 are a secret ; *A ſtranger, ſhall not meddle with his*
joy : So is their ſafety or ſecurity ; they do not un-
 derſtand what kind, nor how great ſecurity ; what
 ſure, nor what ſweet repoſe, the Saints find in God.
 The ſecret of Gods preſence is a ſure, and a ſweet
 reſting place, for all his Saints ; but how ſure, and
 how ſweet, no man knows, but they that enjoy it.
 The ſecret intimations of the care of God for them,
 of his everlaſting kindneſs to them ; of his govern-
 ing hand in all that befalls them, working it to their
 greater good ; the ſecret ſupports and reſreſhings
 darted in, as the beams of his Countenance ; their
 ſecret ſence, that their head, their main, is in ſafety,
 though they have bruises in their heel, will yield
 ſuch reſt in the day of greateſt adverſity, as men can
 neither ſee, nor take from them. The Pillar of the
 Cloud interpoſed, did both hinder the *Egyptians*
 purſuit, and hide from their eyes the comfort of
 that Light which ſhined upon the Camp of *Israel*.
Moses knew what the comfort of Gods preſence
 meant, when he ſaid, *Exod. 33. 15. If thy preſence*
go not with us, carry us not hence. 'Tis (if conſidered)
 a great word. *Israel* was then in a *Wilderneſſe* ;
 among wild beaſts, among bryars, and thorns, in a
 weary pilgrimage ; but they had God among them :
 The Lord was carrying them to *Canaan*, the Land
 of their reſt, a Land flowing with milk & honey : but
Moses prays, *If thy preſence go not with us, carry us*
C
not

not hence. We had rather be where we are, in a Wilderness with God, than to go to Canaan, & leave our God behind us. If thy presence go with us, we are willing to go, when thou wilt, whither thou wilt, which way thou wilt; though by the Tents of *Eamites*, *Ishmaelites*, *Moabites*. *Hagarens*; though through the Armies of *Anakims*, *Zamzumims*, we'll go any whither, so God go with us. The absence of God makes a *Canaan* worse than a *Wilderness*: the presence of God makes a *Wilderness* better than a *Canaan*: And this presence of God, shall be the Lot of all his Saints.

Reas. 2. If God be with you, all shall make for you: All Providential Occurrences, and Events whatsoever: All Difficulties, Straits, Disasters, Disappointments, whatsoever, that may come upon you, shall make for your good. *Rom. 8. 31.* *If God be with us, who shall be against us?* Who can be against us! that is, None can be against us: Or if any be, yet those that are against you shall be for you. *Gen. 42. 36.* *Joseph is not, and Simeon is not* (said old Jacob) and mult *Benjamin* away too? all these things are against me: but yet as old as he was, he liv'd to see all making for him. *Rom. 8. 26.* *We know all things shall work together for good to those that love God.* This is such a Promise, as if it were thoroughly believed, would set our feet on the necks of all our fears and dangers, and will prove the truth of *Sampson's Riddle*, *Out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong, sweetness.*

Now because there is so great encouragement to godliness in it, I shall spend the more time in enlarging upon it; and shall shew,

1. VVhat those things are which are especially intended,

meant, in that comprehensive terme (*all things*.)

2. What that good is, which these things shall work to.

3. To whom these things shall work for good.

4. How these things shall work for good.

5. That they shall undoubtedly work for good, to them that love God.

1. What those things are, which are especially intended, in that comprehensive term [*All things.*] Some there are, as *Augustine* with others, who understand it *universally*, of all things whatsoever, whether good or evil, extending it even to the sins of *the Saints*. It's true, God doth often bring good out of these evils, making use of former sins, to be forces against future : as the thorn, that did hurt in the Garden, will be of use in the Hedge : sin often becomes it's own death, which was intended to be the death of the Soul : There's nothing that doth make the Sinner more weary, and wary of sin, than Sin it self : the review of what we have done, doth ofteneft fright us of doing so any more. When you look back on sin, and see it's face (for sin carries it's face in it's back) you'l fear it the more, whenever you meet it again. There's no argument doth more effectually humble, and break the heart, and make it more fearfull, and warchfull against sin, than the shame, and the smart of those sins we have fallen by; he that hath felt the wound, will take heed how he playes with edge-tools. This is true, God doth often make this use of sin, to be it's own cure : and therefore 'tis not seldome seen, that the *chief of Sinners* have come to be the *chief of Saints*. Yet, besides that this is not the subject matter that the Apostle is here treating of; let those that bring sin within the

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compass of this promise, and make this to run into
the sence of it ; that even all the sins of the Saints
shall work for their good, let such tell us, how, or
in what way its imaginable, that the *sinful decays* of
such who back-slide from God, and never recover to
their former life, and vigour, but live and dye in a
languishing state of Soule, let them tell us, how such
sins can be imagined to work for their good ; 'till
then, we must enter our dissent from this interpreta-
tion.

This then is not the sence of the promise, that all
sins shall work together for good.

And yet if it were, it would be but a poor argu-
ment, to take the more liberty to sin, because God
will turn it to good ; this would be even as rational,
as for a man to tear his flesh, break his bones, pluck
out his eyes, burn his house, &c. because God will
turn all his sufferings to good: he is little better than
mad, that would not conclude such a man out of his
Wits.

Others restrain it to the *evil things* that befall the
Saints, not the *turpia*, but the *tristia*, their sufferings
and afflictions ; to that vanity, and those vexations,
they are in bondage under, and under which with
the whole Creation, they groan and travel in pain,
waiting for their redemption: of which, the Apostle
had been treating in the former part of this Chapter.
And yet while they pitch the sence, especially on
such things as these, they grant it may be extended
to all other things, sin only excepted ; *ad omnes res,
creaturas eventus, tum secundus, tum adversos* : To
all things and events, whether prosperous or afflict-
ed. So *Parvus*, with others.

And these I take to have hit the right. All heavy
things

things, all the sufferings and afflictions of the Saints ; and not only these, but all things else whatsoever, that in the whole course of providence be their lot or portion : all the dealings of God with them, all the dispensations of Providence towards them, shall all work for their good.

2. What is that good, which these things work to the Saints ; or in what sence all things may be said to work good to them. The sence in general is this ; They shall all work to their welfare ; they shall all happen to them for the better : there shall nothing befall them, but one time or other, they shall have reason to say ; 'Twas well for me, that it was thus with me. The wisdom and goodness of God, did cut out such portions continually for me, did lead me thorow such a *series* and succession of cases and events, which though I could not understand ; yet now I see that every condition ; every contingency and occurrence of my life, through which Providence led me, was useful, and could not well have been wanted, but it would have been the worse for me. Thus in the general.

Particularly, for the fuller understanding what good it is that all things, to consider, that there is a twofold good of the Saints ; Such as they obtain and enjoy, whilst they are *in via*, in their way or Course ; or such as they shall obtain, when they are *in termino* : when they are gotten to the end of their way, when they are come to their place. Or thus ; There is a threefold good of the Saints ;

Temporal.

Spiritual.

Eternal.

1. Temporal good, or our *bona corporis*, the out-

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ward good things of this life, which may serve, and please, and delight us in these dayes of our pilgrimage : which may abide with us, and attend us to our graves, but there will take their leave of us.

2. *Spiritual good*, or our *bona anima*, and those are either, 1. External, as the Ordinances of God, the Light, Liberties and priviledges of the Gospel, the Sociery and Communion of Saints, and our peaceful and plentiful enjoying of them. 2. Internal, as spiritual Grace, Faith, Love, Hope, Patience, &c.

3. *Eternal good*, or that glory and joy, that everlasting rest and peace, the possession of that inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that is reserved in Heaven for us.

Now here note these things.

1. That our *bona corporis*, our outward good things, are only good for us, as they are conducive *ad bonum spirituale*, to the good of our Souls. The *bona via*, are only good in the event, when they tend to the *bonum Patria*. This World is but a Nursery for Eternity ; we are planted in this, in order to our transplanting into the other World : and whatever we have here, is either good or evil, according to the respect that it bears to hereafter : As far forth as our immortal part is improved by these perishing things, so far forth only, are they good for us. He that hath this worlds goods, and is not hereby made more rich towards God ; he who prospers in this World, and yet his Soul doth not prosper : much more, he whose outward fulness becomes the emptiness, and leanness of his Soul : Are these good things good for him ? Is he in prosperity

liberty upon a true account, whose Soul prospers not? It is not ever good to prosper in the World: It cannot be universally said, It's good to be rich, its good to be in health, its good to be in honour, its good to be at liberty: the contrary may sometimes be true, it's good to be poor, to be sick, to be in disgrace, to be in bonds: the necessity of our Souls doth not seldome require it: Then alone is it good to be full, and to abound, when our outward abundance furthers our spiritual welfare.

Christians, could we receive this truth, That our outward good things are only good for us, as far forth, as they conduce to our spiritual good, could we receive this truth, and live under the power of it; what a different judgement should we then have of all these worldly matters, from what we have? and how strangely would the course of this world be then changed? Would there then be such violent and eager pursuing these carnal things? Would there then be such whining and complaining, and murmuring at every crosse Providence? VVe would then say, This may be good for me; good for my soul, how sad soever it looks.

2. That the external spiritual good things, the Ministry and Ordinances of the Gospel, &c. are so far good to us, as they conduce to our internal spiritual good; and they being ordinarily so, it must be concluded, That ordinarily it is good for us, that we enjoy them, and be not deprived of them. God may see the cutting Christians short of those Priviledges, and Liberties, to be sometimes needful for them; and then even this also makes for their good: VVhereof more anon.

3. That our inward spiritual good, is good for us, so far forth as it tends to our eternal good : and therefore grace is ever good for us. It's ever true : It's good to be holy, good to be humble, to be in the fear of God, and to flourish in his grace. VVe may have too much Money, too much Credit, but we can never have too much Grace. Our greatest flourishing and fruitfulness in grace, will certainly abound to our more full-reward.

4. Note, That this is the plain sence and meaning of the promise, *All things shall work [for good]* that is, whatsoever befalls, shall certainly promote our internal and eternal welfare : And as far forth as the outward Priviledges of the Gospel, yea, and the good things of this life, conduce towards this, all shall work for these also. If it be good for us to be rich, if it be good for us to be in honour, good for us to be at liberty ; good for our Souls, good in reference to our eternal state ; if it be good for us that we enjoy the Ministry of the Gospel ; there shall nothing befall us, that shall hinder ; there shall be nothing wanting to us, that might further this our good.

The summe is, That all providential dispensations shall be so ordered, that we shall want nothing but what its better want than have : VVe shall suffer nothing but what we cannot well be without, but what the good of our Souls requires ; and that which we do possess, and that which we do suffer, shall not fail of bringing about its end, the advancing our eternal good.

And if this be the meaning, what a glorious Promise is this ? What can any rational man desire more ? nothing shall befall him but shall be for his good :

good : He shall be deprived or kept short of nothing; but what he had better be without than have. He that is unsatisfied with this Promise, it is either from *Lust* or *Unbelief*; Either he doth not believe, that God is true, and will perform this Word: or else 'tis because his Lust must be satisfied, though with the denial of his Reason and Interest; he that desires an Estate in the world, Ease, Pleasure, Liberty, or any thing else upon any other terms, but as they may be for his real good, hath as much lost his Wits as his Faith: and he that will take upon him to know what's good for him, better than God, may as well take upon him to govern the World. You may with as good reason, desire a Fever, or a Dropsie, that you may have the pleasure of your drink; as for the pleasures that carnal things would bring you in, to desire them, when they would be a snare to your Souls.

3. To whom these things shall work for good: *To them that love God*, to them that are called according to his purpose: To the people of God; who, you see, are here described by their *Election* and *Vocation*, [the called according to his purpose] and their *Sanctification*, [they that love God] Love is, as I told you before, the fulfilling of the Law. Love God, and you will live in the obedience of his whole Will: These are the people to whom this Promise is made; prove your Calling and Election, prove your Sanctification, and you may write your names in this glorious Promise: *All things shall work for your good.*

To those that are Rebels, and Reprobates from God, all things shall work together for evil. Whilst things hurtful work together for good to the Saints:
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all good things work together for the hurt of Sinners : their Peace hurts them , their plenty hurts them , their pleasure hurts them : yea , both their prosperity , and adversity ; their plenty , and their poverty ; their pleasure , and their trouble , their honour and disgrace , and every thing that befalls them , turns to their prejudice. Their prosperity destroys them : their Table is their snare ; their pleasures are their plagues ; and their very punishments are turned into sin : every thing that befalls them , heightens and hardens them in their wickedness , and ripens them for vengeance. God is not with them , and therefore nothing prospers with them. God is with his Saints , and therefore nothing comes amiss to them , but all for their greater advantage : Christians , this is your *portion* , and your *peculiar* , wherein the men of this World shall neither partake with you , nor be ever able to deprive you of it.

4. How all things shall work for their good : in special , how shall the *evil things* , the Sufferings of this life be for their good : How can this be ? Must we disbelieve our Senses , lay down our Reasons , ere we can believe the Scriptures ? Must we call evil , good ; and good , evil ? Must we count darkness light , and light darkness ? Is pleasure pain , and pain pleasure ? Is loss gain , and gain loss ? Is ease torment , and torment ease ? Doth Religion make things cease to be what they are , and to be what they are not ? or at least , Must we believe , that darkness is the *Mother* of light , that good is the *Daughter* of evil ? Can we gather grapes of thorns , or figs of thistles ? Can darkness give light , or death it self bring forth life ? Must we say , that contraries no longer destroy , but produce each other , and that the
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Evil brings forth its own destruction? How can these things be?

But must God give a Reason of his actions, or else they are not! though evil cannot bring forth good, darkness cannot bring forth light; yet, Cannot God bring forth good out of Evil, light out of darkness? Though darkness cannot bring forth light; evil cannot bring forth good, by a natural causation; yet Cannot God make evil an occasion of good? Though it do work *efficiently*, yet can it not work *objectively* neither to it? Though the torment, the Medicine puts men to, be not ease, yet may it not work towards ease? May not the storm, though it help not, yet hasten the Labourer on his work, the Traveller on his way? May not the darkness of the night, make more diligent in the day? May not sickness teach men more temperance, and poverty more frugality?

But to proceed more distinctly; How can the Saints evil things work to their good? That they do so cannot be denied, unless we will deny, not only Scripture, but common Sense and Experience; but how comes it to pass?

I answer in 4. Particulars:

1. The Affliction and Tribulations of the Saints are *the way* that leads them on to the possession of that good, which God hath intended to them; afflictions are the way of the Kingdom; the Cross is the way to the Crown, *Acts 14. 22. Through many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God.* *Psal. 66. 11, 12. Thou broughtest us into the net, thou hast laid affliction upon our loyns, thou hast caused men to ride over our heads: we went through fire and water, thou broughtest us into a wealthy place.*

Observe

Observe it ; Their troubles are their way to their Triumph ; their very falling into the net, their way to escape. Their Enemies boast ; Escape ! Arise ! yes, let them free themselves with such hopes while they will, we have them sure enough, we have them under foot, we have them in the net : If this be their way, wee'l keep them in their way long enough ; Now we have them down they shall not be able to rise. I, but yet it appears, through all this the Lord led them forth into a wealthy place. The High-way of the proud is not their more ready way to the dust, than the dust of Saints is their sure way to honour. When *Israel* were to go to *Canaan*, they must take the Brick-Kilnes, the Red Sea, the Wilderness, *Jordan*, in their way : could any one have imagined, that the bondage, the straits they were under, the doubling their Tasks, the cruelty of their Task-Masters, their enclosure at the Red Sea, did mean any good to them? yet how fell it out at last? their darkest dispensations had light in their latter end ; Their greatest bondage leads on to their greatest liberty,

Every cross Providence is a step to the accomplishment of the Promise ; The Wheel is ever moving on to its end ; it moves still forwards, even when it seems to go quite backwards : As the River by its many turnings and windings forwards and backwards is still in motion to the Sea, when it seems to be running quite contrary.

Christians, if ever the Salvation of God seems to be removed farther off from you ; If the work of God should at any time seem to go backwards ; if cross winds should turn the whole course, so that you appear rather to be marching back to *Egypt*, than
on

on to *Canaan* ; yet be not discouraged ; though your way be an unlikely, an unpromising way, though you be led about forwards, and backwards, yet still you are making on : though the lesser Wheels be never so cross and contrary in their motions, yet the great Wheel is still moving Right on to your blessed and hoped end. God intends your good, your spiritual good here, your eternal good hereafter : and believe it now, for he will let you see it hereafter, that those very things which most threaten your miscarriage, and a total abortion of your hopes, are made all to concur to the bringing them about, and to your more full and speedy possession of them.

Note farther here two Things.

1. All things work ; not they shall work, *de futuro*, but *de presenti*, they do work ; as the Apostle says, *The Mystery of Iniquity* ; so we may say, *The Mystery of the Saints Redemption doth already work* ; the work is already on the wheel, and every wheel is in its motion for you : not only your *Brethren*, the *Saints* and *Angels*, who are all praying for your peace, and seeking your good, but your *Enemies* also, the *Dragon*, with all his Armies, are at work for you ; all the *Councils* of this world, are already sitting upon the very matter : God hath call'd them together for this purpose. The *Pope*, with all his *Conclave* ; the *Jesuits*, *Preists*, *Monks*, and *Friars*, with all their *Convents* ; yea, the *Devil*, with all his *Conclave of Hell*, are all at work for the good of *Saints*. It's true, they mean not, nor intend any such thing, their designs are against you ; they count, they are working for themselves ; as 'tis said concerning the *Assyrian*, *Isa. 10. 6, 7.* God sent him forth upon a Design of his

his own, to execute his Counsel, in the punishing of *Hypocrites*; to purge out the Chaff from the Wheat; nevertheless, he meaneth not so, nor doth his heart think so; the *Affyrian* minds not what God's Design is, but follows his own Design, fights for himself, and spoils for himself; but God's Design is still carried on by him, though he think not of it.

All the *Events* in the World are driving the same way; every Disease or Infirmity that comes upon you, every Loss that you sustain, every Scoff or Reproach that you suffer; the shame in your Faces, the Sorrow of your Hearts, the Torment in your Bowels, the Aches in your Bones, are all working your good. All the *changes* of your Conditions, your fair Weather and your foul, your Sun-shine and your Clouds, your Plenty and your Wants, your Eases and your Pains, your Liberties and your Prisons, are all making for you; your good is *already* working by all these Things.

See Christians, what an Harvest of Blessedness is growing up to you, out of this *Promise*; the *Seed* is already sowing, your good is already working; God is at work, the whole Creation is at work, Men and Angels, good men and evil men, Friends and Enemies, Heaven and Earth, and Hell, are already engaged to work your good.

2. They work together, that is, as some understand it, they work together with God: all the second causes work together with the first Cause; or as others, They work together amongst themselves. There is such a concatenation and concentrating of all these second causes, in the same Design, that however they seem to thwart, and cross, and destroy some of them, what the others build and advance, yet they
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are all united in their End, they jointly contribute to the Weal of the *Saints*. Though, if I mistake not, this latter be the more sense of the two : Yet I know no reason, why both may not be understood. In the hand, and under the conduction of *Providence*, all these lower Things concur and co-operate in the good of the Church.

By the way, observe what an Harmony there is in all the Works of *Providence*: The most cross and thwarting *Occurrences*, do all conspire, and go hand in hand to bring about the same end. As the differing Vertues of various Drugs, do all concur to make up the Medicine : As the differing sounds of several strings or Instruments, do all together make up the Melody. As the differing Colours in a Picture, the dark as well as the brighter, do jointly contribute to the Beauty of the Piece ; no less do the most contrary, and contradictory Actions and Events, both make up the Beauty of *Providence*, and jointly subserve that one End, to which, by an unseen Hand, and an all-seeing Eye, they are directed, and intended.

2. The *evil things* that befall the *Saints*, come upon them to keep out worse things. Where-ever the cross comes, if it had not come, something worse might ? The Cross may be a means to secure from the Curse : The Curse was slain on the Cross of Christ ; and our Cross also hath its use, to the delivering us from it.

1 Cor. 11. 32. *We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World. Perissem nisi perissem* : I had died, if I had not suffer'd : 'Tis more mens cases besides his that spake it ; 'tis no bad Exchange, to have a Cross instead of a Curse.

3. The

3. The evil things of the Saints prepare them for better things: that they may work good for them, they are working them to good; working out their sin and iniquity, wearying them of sin, *Hosea 2.6. I will hedge up her way with thorns: then shall she say, I will return:* Sin brought in Afflictions into the World, and Afflictions help to carry sin out; the Cross, to which sin was once nail'd, is now nail'd to Sin: The Saints can seldome be meddling with Sin, but they find it too heavy for them; The Cross that is nail'd at the farther end of it, makes it a Burthen which they cannot bear. In some sense, not only the Bloud of the Lamb, but the Bloud of the Sheep may purge away Sin: though only the *ωσπρήματα χεῖρ* can expiate and take away the guilt, yet the *ωσπρήματα* may have their place, in purging away the filth of sin; *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, & this is all the fruit to take away his sin.* Our Lord beats the Devil with his own Weapons, by those very means purging his Saints, by which he endeavours to pollute them: making those very Persecutions, by which he labours to force them from Holiness, to fix them in it: A fawning World does them more mischief, than a fuming Devil. By that the Devil hath cast up his Cards, he will find himself a Loser by all his Rage.

Christians, comfort your hearts: those Flouds that are cast forth against you, shall but wash you the whiter, and make you more meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light: your Purgatory prepares you for your Paradise. No unclean thing must enter in thither: and you are not like to be made so clean, as by falling into the hands of the unclean. The Saints never look so well: like Sheep come

come from the washing, as when they come up from the Pits, their very black makes them comely.

Oh Christians, what a comfort would it be, if your Experiences might come in, and seal to this Truth : If you could say, Thus it hath been with me; *Before I was afflicted, I went astray: I was proud, and vain, and warren, and slothful, and carnal, but now have I kept thy word.*

Sinners, What-ever your mind be in persecuting the Saints, never think to debauch them by it ; if that be your aim, you mistake your course ; the living Spark which God hath kindled in them, will not be blown out, but be blown up, by your puffing at it ; the Dirt you cast upon them, doth but scour them the brighter : You take the best course you can, to keep them closer to the Lord, and his way : The warm Sun will more hazard the loss of their Garments, than the blustering Wind : Let them alone, the Spirit of the Lord within them will be too hard for Hell, with all its black Regiments ; and will not only secure them, but advance them yet higher, by all their Assaults. These stars shine the brightest, when the Night is darkest : When you have done your worst, 'twill be the better with them ; though they will not thank you, yet they will thank God, for what they have suffer'd by you. If this be your aim to make them like your selves ; you may set your hearts at rest, and give over such a vain attempt : Your fury is like to do as little to force them, as your vertues are to invite them to a compliance with you. Your Faces are too *foul* to draw them into your love, and yet not *fierce* enough to drive them into your fear. Satan, try thy utmost strength and skill ; and if thou losest not by thine own play at last, if thou find'st not the

poor people of God gotten nearer *Heaven*, by thy attempts of plucking them down to *Hell*, then let thy Lyes be believed before the everlasting Gospel.

Christian, Make me not ashamed in this same confident boasting of you ; yea, contradict not your God, by suffering your selves to be corrupted by evil men. The Lord himself hath adventured deep upon your Integrity and stedfastness : The honour of his Truth and Faithfulness lyes at stake ; he hath said, *They shall not be afraid of any evil Tydings, their heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, Psal. 112. 7.* He hath said *By this shall their iniquity be purged, and this shall be all the fruit, to take away their sin.* God hath said, *All things shall work together for good to them.* They shall not be the worse, but the better, for all that befalls them : They shall love me and my holy wayes the more, they shall cleave unto me the closer, they shall be made more pure, and more tender, by all they suffer for Righteousness sake : they shall love Conscience, and their Integrity and Faithfulness to it, never the worse, for that it hath cost them so dear ; but shall prize it the more, and be the more wary and tender, how they pollute and turn aside from it, God hath adventured deep on you, make not him a Liar ; the devil & his instruments will be ready to say concerning you, as once he did to the Lord, concerning his Servant *Job* ; *Put them into our power, let us have the handling of them a while, and thou shalt quickly see, what truth there is in them, or what trust there is to them ; they'll curse thee to thy face, they'll deny thee to thy face, they'll eat their own words, they'll be ashamed of their God, their Godliness, and Confidence.* Let God be true, Christians, and the Devil a Liar ; be living Commentaries on this blessed Text ; Let the
World,

World, and their black Prince see, that they cannot make you miserable, because they cannot make you sinners like themselves : That you are still the more upright, for falling into the hands of a crooked Generation : Let them see, that though your God will not suffer you, yet you are contented to serve him for nothing. That though his Hedge be removed from you, yet your Heart is not removed from him : Be able to say, *Though all this be come upon us, Our heart is not turned back, neither have we declined thy way.* Let our standing and encreasing in the Grace of God, and abounding in the works of Righteousness, be a standing VVitness for God in the VVorld, and a Seal to his Scriptures, and in special to the glorious Truth of this Text.

4. The evil things of the Saints, prepare better things for them; their Sufferings go into their Reward : *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ :* Every suffering comes with a comfort in its Belly : and the sweet is so great, as swallows up the bitter ; 'tis a hundred fold, that the Saints gain by all their Losses in this Life ; but how great shall their Reward be in Heaven ! 2 Cor. 4. 17. *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding Eternal Weight of Glory.* They shall not only have weight for weight, measure for measure, their Load of Glory, for their Load of Sufferings ; but they shall have over-weight, over-measure ; good measure, pressed down, heaped together, and running over, shall then be given unto them : According to their deep poverty, shall be the height of their riches ; according as their blackness hath been in their Houses of Bondage, shall be their brightness in the Land of

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Promise; for all thy *shames thou shalt have double*: The double of thy Reproach in Renown, the double of thy Tears in Triumphs, all thy bottled Tears shall be returned in Flagons of Joy, yea in Rivers of Eternal Pleasure.

By this time Christians, you see what glory there is in this good word: *All things shall work together for good to them that love God*. And that none may have the face to say, all this is but conceit; I shall, in the next place, bring in clear and undeniable Evidence, that it is certainly, and unquestionably, so as hath been said: And therefore know,

5. That all things do and shall certainly work, *for good to them that love God*. This (besides the Testimony of this Scripture) I shall make evident, from these three Propositions.

1. There is a *Divine Providence* that governs the VWorld.

2. The Design of *Providence*, is the accomplishment of the good purpose and promise of God.

3. The *Providence* of God shall never fail of accomplishing its end.

1. There is a *Divine Providence* which governs the VWorld: the *Epicureans*, who deny *Providence*, and leave all on *Chance* and *Fortune*, may as well deny that there is a God; which yet they are ashamed to stand to. Of *Epicurus* himself it was said, *Quem nihil pudendum pudet, pudet tamen Deum negare*.

It can be no way reconcilable to the infinite Wisdom of God, who made this Glorious Fabrick, with the various Creatures therein, either not to determine them to their Ends, or else to take no care for their accomplishing those Ends they are determined to. The whole Current of Scripture is so plain

plain in these matters, that he that runs may read : Let the following Scriptures, amongst others be considered.

Psal. 97. 1. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce, let the isles be glad. Psal. 67. 15, 16. The Eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their Meat in due season : Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desires of every living thing. Psal. 36. 6. Thou preservest man and beast, Psal. 75. 6, 7. Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South ; but God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another. Amos 3. 6. Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it ? Psal. 17. 13, 14. Deliver my Soul from the wicked, which is thy Sword, from Men which are thy Hand. The confessions of those Infidels, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, speak the same, Dan. 4. 35. All the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will, in the Army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, What dost thou ? Dan. 6. 26. I make a Decree, that in every Dominion of my Kingdom, Men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the Living God, and stedfast for ever ; and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed ; and his Dominion shall be even unto the End : He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh Signes and Wonders in Heaven and Earth ; who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the Lions.

But more distinctly, the Lord governs all inanimate and sensitive Creatures, in their actions ; he orders the Stars in their courses. The Stars in their courses, he made to fight against *Sisera*. He governs the Winds and the Floods ; he bringeth forth the

Winds out of his Treasures, he rides upon the wings of the Wind. He maketh the Clouds his Chariots, he sitteth on the Floods; the Thunder and the Hail, and the Rain and the Frosts, are all at his Command. He giveth Snow like Wool, and scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth the Ice like morsels; he sets bounds to the Sea, which it shall not pass; the Birds of the Air, the Beasts of the Field, the Fishes of the Sea; yea the stones and dust of the Earth, are all at his beck.

More especially, he rules and governs *the men of this World*. He sits in all the *Counsels of men*, though they see him not, he orders all *their Decrees*; there's no Decree can pass unless God gives his Vote. He rules in all the *actions of men*; even those things that are acted through our improvidence, come not to pass without the providence of God. He rules in all the *changes that are in the world*; he changes the times and the seasons; he changes Kingdoms, and Governments; he removeth Kings, and setteth up Kings; he makes War, and creates Peace; he bendeth the Bow, and breaketh the Bow, and curteth the Spear in sunder, and burneth the Chariots in the fire: Peace and War, Health and Sickness, Plenty and Famine, Life and Death, are all the disposures of his hand. He orders all the *events and casualties* of the World; even from the greatest to the smallest. Without him, nor a Sparrow shall fall, nor a hair of the Head shall perish; though there be to men, yet to the Lord there are no casualties, or contingencies. But all things come to pass, according as his Hand and Counsel had before determined.

2. The design of Providence (as it respects the Elect) is the accomplishment of Gods good purpose and promise. Providence governs the World, and the purpose and promise governs Providence. All the works of Providence have *rationem mediorum ad finem*. God doth nothing in vain: it is not consistent with the wisdom of God, to do any thing for nothing. God would have his People look farther than the things that are before them, because all those things have a farther aspect themselves. All the works of Providence have a double aspect; they look *backward*, to the purpose and promise; and they look *forward*, to the end for which they are: as they look backward, so they have *truth* in them, exactly answering the purpose and promise from which they have their birth. As they look forward to their end, so they have good in them; and that good (their subserviency to their end) is the reason of their being. : Here note 2. things.

1. That the subserviency of things to their end, is the goodness of them; if the end be good, the means must (as such) be good also: If what God hath purposed and promised be good, then all things that fall in between, having the respect of means to their accomplishment, must upon that account be good. If our crosses and afflictions, do subserve the bringing about of Gods good will, and good word, we must say concerning them, *Good are the works of the Lord*. It is not, how any thing looks, or feels at present, but what it means, and to what it tends. If the potion be bitter, and yet it tends to health; if the Messenger be ill-looking, and ill-favoured, and yet comes upon a good errand, you may bid them welcom. And thus all the Providences of God are good. If you

should ask of any Providence, wherefore art thou come? *comest thou peaceably?* comest thou for good? they must all answer, *yes, peaceably*, for good and no hurt. 'Tis but to help all that good into thy hand, which hath been in the heart, and hath proceeded out of the mouth of thy God that loves thee. There is not a *Messenger of Sathan*, that comes to buffet thee, but is also a *Messenger from God*, that comes to thee for good.. The very thorns in thy flesh shall serve thee for Plaisters, thine eye-sores shall be thine eye-salve, and thy very Maladies thy Medicines.

2. That this relative goodness of all the works of Providence, is the reason of their Being. Therefore God doth what he doth, that hereby he may do what he hath said and intended. I do not say that the reason of Gods taking this or that means, is alwayes from any thing in it self, or for his natural tendency to such an end above any thing else : God hath his choyce of means, he can chuse here or there at pleasure, can make use of what he will to serve his design; but the reason why things are, is this, God in his Wisdom, saw their *ordinability* to this good end, and thereupon in his Providence, he *orders* and brings them to pass.

So that now, whatever befalls a Christian, he hath this to allay and take off the grievousness and sharpness of it. This had never been, but for the good will, and good word of the Lord to me. The Lord God hath said he will bless me, and do me good; he will heal, and sanctifie, and save me, and now he is about it; by this he is working that Salvation for me.

Christians,

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Christians, you have no reason to say, If the Lord be with me, why am I thus ? why so poor, why so pained, so persecuted, so scorned and trampled upon ? sure, if the Lord had meant my good, it would have been better than 'tis with me : No, no, 'tis because the Lord is with thee, and means thee well, that he deals in this manner with thee. The Design of his Providence towards thee, is the accomplishment of his Promise.

3. The Providence of God shall never fail of accomplishing its end. There is nothing wanting that might give us the fullest assurance hereof. For,

1. The Providence of God hath power with it. He is Almighty that hath promised ; he that ruleth in the earth, dwelleth in the Heaven, and doth whatsoever he will. *Our God is in heaven, and doth whatsoever he will. I will work, and who shall lett it ?* Is. 43. Who can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou ? were it not for our unbelief, our case would be still the same in greatest difficulties, as when the Coasts are most clear. We might say of difficulties, as the Psalmist of darkness, *there is no darkness with thee, to thee day and night are both alike.* Difficulties are no difficulties with thee, nor is there difference betwixt hard and easie. He can save with many, or with few ; and with none, is as well as with some. We once read he had too many but never that he had too few, to bring about his work. Oh how we do desparage the power of God, when our difficulties make us doubt ? Is he God, and not man ? Is he spirit, and not flesh ? Wherefore then dost thou doubt ? What ever God hath said he can do : Believe he is a God, and thou wilt never say, How can these things be ?

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2. The Providence of God hath *wisdom* with it : he is the only wise, he is the all-wise God ; He knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, 2 Pet. 2. 9. He knoweth what is good for his Saints, and when it will be in season ; he understandeth what is proper, and pertinent to every case. What's proper to every purpose, to every people, to every person, and for every season ; he knows when 'tis a season to abase, and when to exalt ; when to afflict, and when to deliver ; when to put on the yoke, and when to take off the yoke ; when to pull down, and when to build up : every thing is beautiful in its season. If mercies come *out of season*, mercies would be no mercies ; and if troubles come *in their season*, troubles should be no troubles : He knows the best method, and means to his end, the fittest means ; he sees sometimes the unfittest to be the fittest, the most unlikely unpromising means, do often best serve Gods end.

Christians, if you would receive every dispensation, as coming from the hands of the wise God : you would never quarrel with your lot, nor say of any thing that befalls, I might be happy, but this stands in my way. If you would give God leave to be wiser than you, you would say where-ever you are, *its good for me to be here*, this is my way to my rest.

3. The Providence of God hath *faithfulness* with it. Psal. 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and [truth] to them that keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies*, Psal. 111. 8. His Works are done in *truth*. Gods works may be said to be done in truth, in a double sense.

In Reality.

In Fidelity.

1. In Reality; not in *specie*, or in shew only, but indeed. Gods Comforts, are Comforts indeed, Gods Salvation, is Salvation indeed. The Devil will come with his gifts, with his comforts, and deliverances; but they are for the most part, but *spectra*, like himself, shews, and apparitions; quite another thing, than what they seem to be: sinners comforts, deliverances, enjoyments, wherewith the Devil feeds them, do leave them in as poor a case, and worse than they found them: you will never thank the Devil for his kindneses, when you have prov'd them what they are. If you do not find your selves as fast bound, in the midst of all your liberties; if you be not wrapp'd up in as many sorrows, after all the joys he hath procured to you; if the glittering glories, the glorying pleasures he entices you by, and entertains you with, prove not trash and dirt, and meer lies in the end, then say, the Devil hath forgotten his trade of lying: the Devils works will be even like himself, false and deceitful. But God is true, and all his works are done in truth.

2. In Fidelity, his Works are according to his word. 1 King. 8. 24. *Thou hast spoken with thy mouth, & hast fulfilled with thine hand. In thy faithfulness, thou hast afflicted me*, Psal. 119.⁷ Not only in thy faithfulness thou hast saved me, in thy faithfulness thou hast comforted me, in thy faithfulness thou hast succoured me: but in thy faithfulness thou hast afflicted me, in thy faithfulness thou hast humbled, and broken me, and cast me down. The promise of God is, that we shall want nothing; we shall neither want his Staffe, nor his Rod: neither comforts
nor

not crosses ; neither joys nor sorrows ; we cannot well want either, and we shall want neither, because God is faithful. You may not only write down with the Apostle, *God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear* ; but you may write also, *God is faithful, and will not suffer you to want a temptation*. When 'tis seasonable, your hearts shall be glad ; and if need be, for a season you shall be in heaviness. God is faithful, he will ever be true to himself, and therefore to you, 2 Tim. 2. 9. *He abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself*. Should he be false to his people, he cannot be true to himself, to his purpose and promise ; his Word is not yea and nay. God is not as man, that he should lye, or the Son of man, that he should repent ; that he should say, and unsay : that he should say, and not do ; you may write Gods name upon every word he hath spoken, you may write his Name (I Am) upon all that he hath said : It shall be.

Now Christians, put these three Particulars together, and if you cannot spel out the conclusion out of them, *the Providence of God will certainly accomplish his good Purpose and Promise concerning you* : You are of little understanding as well as of little Faith.

If God governs the World, and nothing comes to pass but by his Providence ; if Providence governs according to Gods Purpose and promise ; if Providence cannot fail of accomplishing both.

If God be *Almighty* and can, if God be *Wise* and knows how, if God be *Faithfull* and true, let the Devil if he can, with all his Sophistry, evade the Conclusion, *That he will certainly do all that good for*

for you which he hath purposed and promised : If God be not able to perform, he is not good ; if he mistake his way, if he use impertinent, improper means, he is not the All-wise God. If he do not actually perform what he is able, and knows how to do, when he hath said it, he ceases to be the true God : So that the matter is brought plainly to this Issue ; If God be God, if God be the All-wise God, if God be the true and faithful God, this word which he hath spoken, (*All things shall work together for good to those that love God,*) shall not fail of its accomplishment in its season.

Having thus proved the Doctrine, I shall, after I have added a few words by way of Caution, and answered an Objection or two against the Sense I have given, of this Promise, and subjoyned a few particular Inferences, descend to the general Application.

1. By way of Caution.

1. *Limit not the Lord to your time and way ;* God will make good his word, but you must give him leave to take his own season. *He that believeth shall not make hast :* believe God, but do not prejudice nor precipitate, least you fall into temptation. Put no more into the promise, neither for matter nor circumstance, then God hath put in it : put not that into the Promise, which God hath not put in it, lest you miss and come short of that which God hath put in it. Let others mistakes and miscarriages be warnings to you : till God hath manifestly said, do not you say, *This is the time ;* build not your confidence on conjectures, your Faith on the strongest Presumptions ; lest your Faith prove but a fancy, and your confidence your confusion : make not the promise

mile of God of none effect, by looking for its effect
out of season.

Believe not your selves into Infidelity : Consi-
der, *Acts 1. 7. It is not for you to know the times and
the seasons, which God hath put in his own Power.*
Study the Word, and its commentary, the Works of
God, but be sober in your Conclusions.

This you may safely depend upon, and this will
be enough, if you have no more : God will make
good his good Word to you, sooner or later, in one
time or other, in one way or other ; in the best time,
in the best way, in the appointed time, the Vision
shall speak and shall not lye, *Habak. 2. 3. Though
it may tarry, wait for it ; because it will surely come
and will not tarry : At least, at the end of the days.*
When you shall stand in your loss : when you shall
be gotten on the banks of *Canaan*, and shall thence
look back on the Promises and Providences of God,
ye shall see and say, God is faithful, there hath not
failed one word of all that he hath promised : Now
I understand, though once I could not, how every
Wheel was turning, every Instrument was moving,
every event was working toward my good and ever-
lasting welfare.

2. *Let not your expectation cause an abortion.* Let
not your looking for mercy, hinder the working of
your affliction : It is not seldom, and the Lord grant
it be not too common a case, that our door of hope
becomes a door of sin. We do not set out selves
with that seriousness, to humble, to purge our selves
from our iniquities, as we would do, did we appre-
hend our case more desperate : our feares and our
sorrows have not their kindly work upon us, our hopes
binders it. We might have been more broken-
hearted

hearted, had it not been for our hopes of building up: as it is with a person, who conceives himself to be dying; he then falls to praying and repenting, and setting his heart in order, because he must dye: but upon a little hope of recovery, he layes by his dying thoughts and preparations.

Christians, When-ever you are under afflictions, take heed that your expectation of deliverance be near, put it not so much the farther off. Watch narrowly over your selves, and look diligently to it, that your hope of redemption do not harden your hearts, nor hinder your humiliation and repentance. Hope in God, and wait for the promise of his coming: But know, That till the Rod hath done its work, it is not like in mercy to be laid by; and it is better to be continued in the Furnace, than to be brought forth with your dross unpurged away.

Against this blessed Truth, there are some Objections: As,

Object. 1. Can it ever be said, That the removal of the Gospel, and the preaching of it, can be for good.

Sol. This is an hard Truth; but yet a Truth: That even this shall work for good to those that love God.

1. It's true, That the removal of the Gospel, and the Ministry of it, is a most grievous Judgment: and that which carries with it a greater evidence of wrath and divine displeasure against a People, than any thing that ever befalls them in this World. How great a Judgment it is, we may guess, if we observe those Scripture expressions by which it's set forth. It's called the *famine of the word*, Amos 8. 11. *The glory departed*, 1 Sam. 4. *The Kingdome of Heaven taken*

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taken away, *Math. 6. 41. The Salvation of God sent away, Acts 28.* and can there any thing worse befall a People? a Soul-famine, an Eclipse of their spiritual glory, the shutting up of the Kingdom of Heaven, the carrying away of the Salvation of God: What worse thing can come unto them? It's a great wonder there should be no deeper Sense of this most dreadful of evils, than is mostly found: Men little understand what they *do*, who either in a way of *merit*, or *instrumentally*, procure, and bring on this plague; and few understand, or are sensible, what they herein *suffer*; to be an *instrument* in this hellish work, is an *office for a Devil*; and the *suffering* of such a plague, (to them that understand it) is an *hell above ground*: This darkness is the very same for kind, with the darkness of Hell; as the light of the Gospel is the same in kind, with the everlasting light, as glory under age; so is this thick darkness, *in specie*, and *in semine*, the darkness of the pit. Oh, what an hell of wickedness doth this World then become! the Devil is then in his Region, is let loose, rules the World at pleasure, deceives, devours, destroys Souls, without contradiction, takes them captive at his will, carries them down by whole shoals to destruction: Those that observe what a World there is, where the Gospel is not; what oaths, curses, blasphemies, belluine lusts then abound; what Lions, Tygers, wild Bulls, wild Boars, Men then become one to another, need not be to seek for an Argument, to prove there is an Hell; they see an Hell above-ground.

These dark and dismal seasons; are the Devil's *Marts*, where he may vent his Hellish Wares, his snares,

snare, and temptations, his deceits and delusions, and every abominable thing *by whole sale* : there's nothing so false, so vile, and abominable, but he can put it off at pleasure ; Adultery, Drunkenness, VVitchcraft, Sodomy, Buggery, Blasphemy, Idolatry, Atheism, any thing that Satan hath to offer, he'l find Customers enough to receive : and the truth is the *Devil* may spare his pains ; men then need not a *Devil* to damn them, they'l do it fast enough of their own accords.

Oh 'twere happy, if *Saints* were so busie in improving their Light, to hasten them Heaven-wards, as Sinners do their Darkness, to hurry them to Hell. Oh the sad proofs, that the VVorld affords of this Dreadfull Truth : Look into all the dark Corners of the Earth, especially there where there hath been Light, and see if you find not all this fully proved to your hand. Can he then be accounted a Christian, whose heart doth not tremble at the Thoughts and the Fears of such a sore Judgement? He is both dark and dead indeed, to whom such a Mist is not as the first-born of Death, or the King of Terrours.

Christians, if ever this should be your case, make not light of it ; and take heed, how sad soever it may seem in its first approach, that no Tract of Time do wear off the sence of it.

Those that are weary of the Gospel, that cry out of too much Preaching, that are sick of the Light that shines unto them, you may know by what hath been said, what Judgement to have of them.

But is it not strange, that there should be any such ? That those that have lived in the Light, and seen something, what difference there is between Light and Darkness, should yet love Darkness, ra-

ther than Light? Is it not yet more strange, that any that pretend to be set up for *Lights*, should be for *Darkness*? That the *Prophets* should be against *Prophecy*? that the *Pulpits* should ring against *Preaching*? Some there are, that are not ashamed to tell us, that hence come all our mischiefs and miseries; to tell us, and to stand to it, that there's now, in such a Land as this, little need of *Preaching*; that it had its use in the first publishing and planting of the Gospel; but now that the Gospel is received, and embraced, and competently understood, there's now little more need of *Preaching*; *Praying*, and *Reading* may now serve the turn. I would put in a word or two to such.

No need of *Preaching*; Why? Is the end of *Preaching* accomplish'd? Till the end be attained, there's still need, that the *means* be continued: and what was the end of *Preaching*? Was it mens *Instruction* only, to bring them to the knowledge of Christ, to turn them from Darkness to Light? Was it not for their *Conversion* also, to turn them from the power of *Satan* unto God? Yea, and their *Edification* and *Building up* in Holiness to Salvation? Let these following Scriptures be consulted, *Acts* 26. 18. *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13. The Apostle *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12, 13. told these Christians to whom he wrote, that he would, and he thought it meet so to do, to put them in remembrance, as long as he lived, and to stir them up to their duty; though says he, you know and be established in the present truth. You say you need no more *Preaching*, the *Preacher* can tell you no more than you know already; and might not these have better said it, when the Apostle acknowledgeth of them, that they did know, and more than that, were established in those

those very Truths, he meant, to continue Preaching to them? And yet he tells them, it's meet they be still put in remembrance of them: Sure *Peter's Authority* weighs not so much with these men, as his that pretends to sit in *Peter's Chair*; But hath the Gospel indeed done its Work, and reached its End? Witness the Objectors own cases. Let not onely their Lewdness and Impenitency, but their Ignorance and Unbelief, come in and testify, whether it hath or no. They that have most need themselves, are they that say, *There's no more need of Preaching*. There needs no more Argument, to stop such Mouthes, but the shewing themselves: Or if it should have done its work upon you, yet hath it done its work upon all: Are there no Unbelievers left? Have all men Faith? *Faith comes by Hearing*; and how shall they hear without a Preacher? If you say, they have *Bibles* to instruct them, and their own *Consciences* to preach to them; I answer;

First, for their *Bibles*, two Things:

1. Those that are no Friends to the Pulpit, are none of the best Friends to the Bible: Those that would not that the people should hear, care not how little they read the Scriptures: And be sure, whenever Preaching is let fall, the Bible will in a little while be laid aside.

2. Understandest thou what thou readest? How canst thou without a Guide? He knows but little of the Scriptures, that doth not understand that they are hard to be understood. There are, the Apostle tells us, *Many* in the Scriptures, Things hard to be understood: As there are many *Many* to all that read, so to many that read, all are so. The Vulgar can as well read the Scriptures without their own

Eyes, as understand them without the Preacher's Lips. Till we come to hold, that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion*, or that *Images are Lay-mens Gospel*: till then, let it be granted as necessary, that the Preacher's Lips preserve Knowledge.

2. For *Conscience*; let the Word, at least, be Preached so long, till it be made manifest in the *Consciences* of all the Hearers: That *Conscience* that hath not been sufficiently preached to, will prove an insufficient *Preacher*: Let preaching be continued, till the Word be manifested in the *Consciences* of all the Hearers; and if you will needs have it so, then let it be forborn.

Secondly, hath the *Devil* yet given over Preaching, and are the *Preachers* yet silent? Hath the *Devil* yet given over his Preaching, his deceiving Souls, his perverting the good wayes of the Lord, and discouraging persons from walking in them? Sure there's need that Christ be preached, while there is a *Devil* that impeaches him. Hath the *Devil* them that preach him every day, and must not Christ have them that preach him, at least every Sabbath-day? may *once a moneth*, or *once a quarter*, be enough for these, when every day, and all the day-long, does scarce suffice for those? When, or where are evil men silent? Are they not preaching daily? in the House, in the Streets, in the Taverns, on the Stage, in the Stews? Preaching by their Oaths, their Curses, by their Lyes, by their Scoffs, by their Habits, by their Cups, by their Whores, and almost by all their words, and works? And is there no need that Christ be any longer preached any where, when the *Devil* is preached every where? If in such a case the *Preachers* of Christ should altogether hold their peace, might

might we not expect that the very stones would cry out? This is but a seasonable Demand. Let Faith and Holiness, first have none found that preach against them, before those that preach them, be concluded, such as may well be spared: But what need we reason any longer, in a case so plain, wherein I can have no Adversaries, but such as the Apostle had, when he fought with Beasts at *Ephesus*. Whosoever is an Adversary to Preaching, is either an Infidel, or a Brute. I shall only leave one word for such to chew upon, and so leave them and their cause to the Judgement of God, *Act. 13. 46.* *It was necessary, that the Word of God should have been first spoken to you: but because you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting Life, Lo we turn unto the Gentiles?* Let all back-friends to Preaching, pause sadly upon that Word; you have prevented the Judgement of God, by putting the Word from you, you have given your selves your own Sentence, you have judged your selves unworthy of Everlasting Life. Well, by what hath been said, notwithstanding all that can be said against it, it appears, that the removal of the Gospel, and the preaching of it, is a grievous Judgement.

2. This grievous Judgment shall yet work to the good of *Saints*: That which comes in Wrath on some, may be in Mercy to others: 'Tis the ignorant, the unconverted, the unbelieving part of men, on whom the Vengeance of this Judgment falls: 'Tis those that are weary of the Word, that can worse it. Sinners, you that say to the *Seers*, see not, to the *Prophets*, prophesie no more to us; let us alone, we have enough of this preaching: if God once say, as you say, *Let it be according to their word,* 'tis your

Souls are like to go for it : And 'tis not the least aggravation of the Sorrows of the *Saints*, the misery they see, hereby coming on you : As for themselves, (that I may answer more distinctly)

1. The Gospel shall never be *totally* removed from them ; they shall never see days of Famine : If they never again hear the joyful Sound from without, they shall have it within. The VVord which they have receiv'd, shall be in them a VVell of VVater, springing up unto Eternal Life : If the showers and the Rain fail, yet the Spring which is within them, shall supply that want : If they have no Bible in the House, no Preaching in the Pulpit, yet they have a Bible in their Hearts, a Preacher in their Breasts, that shall instruct and comfort them. *Pharaoh's Dream*, and the *Interpretation* of it, shall be to the *Egyptians*, and not to *Israel*. The lean Kine shall not devour the fat ones ; there is a *Store-house*, from whence they shall be supply'd.

VVhatever scarcity there be, this is certain, not one of them shall want a *Viaticum*, to bring them to their Journeys end. God will not suffer one of his Elect to starve or perish in the way : There shall not fail means of one kind or another, till the whole Body be perfected and built up : *Till (we all) come unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

2. That *Scarcity*, that does at any time befall them, shall happen to them for the better, and not for the worse.

1. For who knows, when-ever the Ministry is removed, but it may be in order to a greater Glory at it's Return ? Perhaps, God's sending away Pastors from a People, may be as *Paul's* absence from the *Romans*,

Romanes, that they may return, in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel : Or as *Onesimus* his departing from *Philemon* : Perhaps, they therefore depart for a season, that they may be received for ever : Or if this should not be the case of any particular Church, if they should return no more ; yea,

2. Their want of means shall supply their want of means ; their want of means shall be their means : When they have no Preacher, their empty Pulpits shall preach to them ; this most smiting of Rods will have its voyce. If they have no longer the Light with them, their darkness shall instruct them ; if they want their *burning* Lights, the very Cold shall preserve and increase their inward vigour ; the wickedness of others shall make them more holy ; the violence of evil men upon sin, shall enkindle their zeal for God ; the darkness that's here below shall make them to live more above ; and all this shall make to their fuller reward. 'Tis a greater vertue to keep up the heart, to keep on our way, where there is a want, than where there are abundance of means and helps ; and an higher vertue shall have a greater reward.

3. The failing of the Word will bring back to their Memories, and upon their own hearts, that which they have received ; and as the emptiness of the Stomack, will cause a second and better Concoction, and turn it into better nourishment ; when there are no more Loaves, they'll gather up the Fragments, that nothing be lost ; the less there is, more to be had ; the more reckoning, & the better use they will make of what they have ; their present want, will be a rebuke of their former wantonness : their want of remembrancers will help their Memories, &

whet their Appetites. Every old truth, that hath been too much laid by, will then be precious.

4. Whenever ordinary means fail, God will either find extraordinary, or else will feed them more immediately on himself, *Psal. 34. 9.* God hath promised, that *those that fear the Lord, shall want no good thing.* If that be meant of temporal good things, yet sure, it will yield us an argument, that will reach the present case. If God will provide for their Carcases, much more for their Souls. If God will supply them with less necessities, then doubtless he will not be wanting in what is absolutely necessary, *Psal. 23. 1, 2, 3.* *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;* and so on through the Psalm. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the dayes of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

Here we have the *Psalmist's* conclusion, and it's foundation; or his confidence, and its ground; his foundation or ground is, the Lord is my Shepherd; his conclusion and confidence is, I shall not want; that is, neither the Body, nor Soul; as appears by the following part of the Psalm. If *Dauid's* Logick, and his Faith too, does not fail him, the conclusion is firm; let the Lord be his Shepherd, and he shall not know famine or want.

Gods Relation to his people, is their security, for a sufficient provision in all times. If the Lord be their Shepherd, he must see them fed; he must either find them those that shall, or do it himself. He must either find them Pastors, or be their Pastor; he must either provide them, or be their Pasture. If ordinary means fail, he must find extraordinary,

dinary, if both fail, he must be instead of means to them.

Here two things.

1. That God stands engaged, as the Shepherd of his people, where ordinary means fail, either to provide them extraordinary, or to feed them more immediately from himself.

2. That extraordinary means, or no means, when God brings his people to it, will be better than their ordinary means.

1. That God stands engaged, as the Shepherd of his people, where ordinary means fail, either to provide them extraordinary, or to feed them more immediately from himself. Feed them he must, or he cannot be faithful; and if means fail, he must supply that want one way or other. Now God is faithful, and will not see his Sheep to starve. *Isa. 41. 17, 18. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open Rivers in high places, and Fountains in the midst of the Vallies; I will make the Wilderness a Pool of water, and the dry Land, Springs of water.* Oh what a good Word is here for the poor Saints to live upon in hard times! It is interpreted to have an immediate reference to the outward, and yet a special respect also to the spiritual wants and distresses. And it will appear, if we compare it with the like expressions. *Chap. 44. 3. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit on thy Seed, and my blessing upon thine off-spring.*

From the former Scriptures note,

1. That

1. That the poor people of God, may sometimes be (as to the visible Soul-provisions) but in a poor case. Needy, and hungry, and thirsty, their hearts fainting, their tongues failing for thirst, and their waters dried up. [If they seek water, and there be none.]

2. All the wants and straits of the Saints, are before the Lord. [I the Lord will hear.] Christians, though those that should will not, yet he that can, will hear the cries of your Souls : all your faintings, and pantings, and longings for the water of life, are before your eyes, and come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath.

3. God hath more wayes than one to relieve the wants, and refresh the bowels of his hungry ones. He hath extraordinary means for extraordinary cases. If they can find no common Rivers, he will open, or make new Rivers. The high places, the dry places, the very Rock will yield a River, when God commands it.

4. Gods extraordinary Provisions shall not be scanty and penurious, but rich and plentiful. 'Tis not some drops, or now and then a draught, a little to stay the longing, or barely enough to keep them alive ; he prepares them Rivers, Fountains, Pools, Springs of water. [I will open Rivers in the high places, Fountains in the Vallies, &c.] Where-ever they be cast, in the high Places, in the Vallies, in the Wildernesse, in the dry Lands, where-ever they be cast, I will cause provision enough to meet them ; though they have neither bag, nor bottle, nor any thing to carry with them, they shall not want ; the Rivers shall meet them, Springs shall arise and break forth to them.

5. They

5. They are not the wanting, but the thirsting, the seeking Souls, whom God will supply. When the poor and needy [seek] water, and there is none. Oh *Christians*! how many poor are there, that sit down by their poverty; who if they starve, yet will not beg, their emptiness hath taken away their Appetites. These are sad Souls; 'tis a sad sight, to behold a company of hunger-bitten Souls, sit weeping and sighing, seeking after the Bread and Water of life, and finding none; but to see empty, and yet not hungry; fainting, and yet not panting, Souls; to see Souls even dying away for want, and yet not desiring or craving a supply, this is a much sorer spectacle. *A starving thirstless Soul is next to a Ghost.*

Well, if ever such Souls find, who never seek water, 'tis more than God hath promised. 'Tis they that seek water, to whom God will open a River.

6. VVhatever difficulty there be, to furnish the hungry Saints, with a sufficiency of Provision, yet one way or other it shall be done. I [the Lord] will hear. I [the God] of *Israel*, will not forsake them. Upon me be all their wants. I am [God] and can, I am [their God] the God of *Israel*, and will provide for them. They must and shall be provided for; whatever course I be put to take, I must not see them starve.

The Lord will not be wanting to them. If his VVord be not heard, his VVorks shall speak; if Preachers cannot, Providence shall preach to them; if their friends cannot, their enemies, their stripes, their wounds, their rods, shall instruct them. *Thy Rod and thy Staffe comfort me.* If they have no
other

other, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, the Fowls of the Air, the Beasts of the Field, shall be their Prophets, and Apostles. If any should fail, yet the Spirit of the Lord shall not fail to be their Teacher and Comforter.

2. Extraordinary means have more in them, than ordinary, and no means more than means.

1. Extraordinary means, when ordinary cannot be had, are sweeter and better feeding to the Saints, than ordinary would be. The less of the Creature, the more of God ; the less of common Providence, the more of special Grace. Water out of the Rock was more precious than out of the River ; the Manna of the Wilderness, was (to them that understood it) better than the Milk of *Canaan*. *Elijah* never made better meales, than what he got out of the Ravens mouth. I have heard of a woman in great distress of Soul, who received comfort, when the Word was brought her by the mouth of a Child, which she had failed of receiving from the mouthes of many excellent Ministers.

2. No means, often prove better than means ; when I say, no means, I do not understand simply none, meanes they shall have, of one kind or other ; their understandings, their memories, their secret duties, Prayer, Meditation, &c. but by no meanes, I understand nothing from without, no Ordinances, Friends, Societies, Books, &c. Gods feeding of a Soul more immediately, is much sweeter, then when he sends provision by the hands of another, the *Samaritans* hearing of Christs words, from his own mouth, was much more to them, than the same words reported by the woman. *Dulcius ex ipso fonte*. Water is the purer, the nearer the Fountain ; the Bread that

that comes down from Heaven, is better Bread, than that which grows up out of the Earth, though that be originally from Heaven also. By how much the more immediately our comforts come from Heaven, by so much the more they have of Heaven in them. If upon the failing of publick Communion, it be made up so much the more in secret, sure the Saints have no reason to complain. And whether this be not so, let the Prisons, into which the Saints have bin sometimes cast, the Wilderness into which they have been sometimes banished; let *Elihu's* Songs in the night, *Peters*, *Pauls*, *Silabs* Songs in the Prison, in the Stocks, stand forth and testifie. If Prison joyes, and exile comforts, have not been often both fuller and sweeter to them, than when they have rolled in *Manna*, and lived in the fulness, and freedom of all helps and means; then not a few Christians, have either mistaken, or mis-reported their experiences. To pretend to live above Ordinances, whilest God affords them, is a wickedness that some men have to repent of; but where God denies them, he doth, he will provide a better subsistence without them.

Now lay all this together, and then you will see, that even this also, this most grievous of Judgements, the famine of the Word, when-ever it befalls, shall work for good to those that love God.

Christians, chear up your hearts: whatever drought, or dearth may fall upon the World, you are provided for, you shall have enough. If the shours fail without, you have within you, that which shall spring up to eternal life. If your streams should be dried up, if your Pastures should be trodden down, you have a God, that will be both your Pastor and Pasture. If the River fail you, the Rock shall

shall supply you; what you want in ordinary, you may look to be made up in extraordinary means. The drying up of the waters, shall but drive you up to the Spring-head. If ever the Stars fail you, God shall but exchange *Star-light* for *Sun-light*; while there's light in the Sun, you shall not walk in darkness. See but to this, make sure that this God is yours, and he must find out a comfortable feeding for you; if you can but say *Dauids* first words after him, *The Lord is my Shepherd*; you may then with confidence, say the whole Psalm after him. *I shall not want, he will make me to lie down in green Pastures; he will lead me by the still waters; though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: thy Rod and thy Staff shall comfort me. Thou shalt prepare me a Table in the presence of mine Enemies: Surely Goodness and Mercy shall follow me all the dayes of my life, and I will dwell in the House of the Lord for ever.*

2. There is another Objection, that seems to have one difficulty in it. Suppose a Saint to fall into *Distraction*, and thereby to be deprived utterly of the use of his Reason, and so to live and die;

How can it be imagined, that this can work for his good, either in this World, or in the World to come? Can any good arise, out of an incapacity of any longer doing or receiving good, or patiently suffering Evil? Can either his Grace here, or his Glory hereafter, be increased or advanced, by a mans being converted into a meer Brute?

1. There's no doubt at all, but this may make for the Churches good: Is there nothing that others may learn out of such a sad Providence? If others may reap good by my evil, is it nothing to me? May it
not

not be said to be good for any particular Saint, to bear the sorest affliction by which the Church may have benefit? He hath not much of a Saint, to whom, if it were afore-hand proposed, whether for the benefit of the Church, he would be content, if God see it good, to fall into such a calamity: He hath little of a Saint, that would deliberately refuse it. Doubtless, a sincere Christian, who would count his usefulness to the good of the whole Body, to be his good, would say even concerning such a Message, were it brought to him, *Good is the word of the Lord*: And that which afore-hand, he would judge to be good for him to submit to, may it not be good for him to be under?

2. It may also be more directly for his particular personal good. For,

1. It may do him the same good, which *Death* will do for him: Concerning which the Apostle says it is yours, 1 *Cor.* 3. that is, it is for your advantage: It may take him from the evil to come; from those sorrows, and that trouble of heart, which God might fore-see falling upon him, by any calamities, coming either on the Church in general, or himself or Family in particular: which being deprived of his Reason, and power to reflect on, he cannot feel, or in the least be afflicted by. If you reply, *But the Remedy is worse than the Disease*: To be useless and unserviceable is less eligible, than to be sorrowful and afflicted: Will any man chuse to fall into a *Lethargy*, or *Apoplexy*, because 'twill secure him from the torment of a *Feaver*? If there be any weight in this Reply, I shall add a further Answer; which, if I mis-judge not, will cut off all Replies,

2. Who

2. Who knows, what *Sins and Temptations* he might have fallen into, and fallen by, had not the Lord by this means prevented it; he might possibly have been a back-slider, have fallen into gross sin, by which he might have been a Terrour to himself, and a Scandal to the Gospel; and is it not good for him, that this is prevented? Is not that affliction a mercy, which secures from such iniquity?

Who can say it is not thus? that the Lord fore-saw he would have fallen into sin, and for prevention, brought him into this affliction: Who can say, it is not thus? If none can, then this is no Objection. If you Reply, You say [*it may be*] this is the case; and I may as well say [*it may be not*] there might be no such thing, that God fore-saw, as the Reason of this *Providence*. 'Tis but a Conjecture, and an uncertainty, when you have made the most of it: Be it so; yet it will fully answer my end: I am not now proving, *that all things work for good to the Saints*, that's sufficiently done already: But you are objecting against it; and till you prove your Objection, which you can never do, unless you prove that this is not the case; you must give me leave again to tell you, your Objection comes to nothing.

And so at length you see this Blessed, Glorious, Comfortable Truth, stands its Ground, and Triumphs over whatever hath any shadow of Contradiction to it.

By the way, learn hence two things.

1. Rejoyce in this *Promise of God*: Hath the Lord put in thy name here, let thine heart say, *It is enough*. Be more joyful in this, that God hath thus undertaken the Care of thee, than if God had wholly

ly

ly put thee to thine own hand ; giving thee power to help ; and liberty to chuse for thy self. In what wilt thou rejoyce, if not in this, that the whole Creation are engaged to do thee a kindness , to help thee into the possession of thy God ? Thou maist now not onely submit to , but thankfully embrace every *Providence* , knowing upon what Errand it comes to thee : for good, and not for hurt. Thou maist now triumph , not onely in the *Constitutions* , but in the *Triumphs* of thine enemies. Whether they ride over thy back , or thou tread on their neck , 'tis all one, the issue will be the same. Thy Troubles and thy Consolations differ only in their Countenance ; with what ever Grim face thy afflictions look, there are smiles under : learn to see through them , and thou maist see light on the further side. Believe this Word , thou maist read it written upon every thing that befalls thee : there's no Messenger that comes, but brings this promise in his hand , *Even this shall work for good*. Read it, and rejoyce.

2. *Lay thy self down quietly under it*. No more perplexing or distracting cares , what shall become of thee : no more unwarrantable shifting for thy self : Let God alone. Shift not for thy self , lest God leave thee to thine own shifts. Let not the violence of evil men disturb thy *Peace* , or provoke thee to *unpeaceableness*. What-ever provocations thou maist have , avenge not thy self , neither give place unto wrath , murmuring , or fears. In thy patience possess thy Soule , thy God , and his good Word : Thy strength is to sit still. Stand still and see the Salvation of God : thou hast nothing to do but to be *Holy* , let that be thine only care : thy God will see to it thou shalt be *happy* : he is faithful that

(46)
last promised. Love God, and leave thy self and
thy whole Interest in this blessed Word, *All things
shall work to thee for good.*

By this time you see something of the Riches of
this Promise : God is in the Promise ; the God of
Peace, the God of Power, the God of Patience, the
God of Hope ; the heart of God, the help of God,
the presence of God ; by vertue whereof, all that
ever befalls them shall work for their good. Me-
thinks the hearing of this Promise opened, should
set your souls, and all that is within you a crying out,
Oh that this were my portion ! Where-ever my
Lot do fall, as to outward things, though in a Pri-
son, though in a Desert, though on a Dunghil ; let
the lot of my Soul lye in this Promise, *The God of
Peace shall be with you.* Why Brethren, will you
take up with Godliness : you have learned and re-
ceived, and heard the Word of the Lord ; the Word
of Faith, the Word of Righteousness and Holiness,
will you hearken to, will you obey these words ?
These things do, and the God of peace shall be with
you.

Oh what foolish Creatures are we, that ever we
should be afraid of Religion, afraid of Holiness,
afraid to own, obey, and follow God and his holy
wayes. What unreasonable fears are these, to those
that believe the Scriptures ? If the Scriptures be
true, this is the only way, this following God in ho-
liness, to put your selves out of all danger, to put your
selves into the heart, arms, presence, protection, of
the Almighty God of Heaven and Earth.

Oh that I could perswade you in thither, and there
leave you ; if you are once in the Lords Arms, you
are safe enough, into whatever hands you fall.

Use

Use. By way of Application, let me once more
speak a few words;

1. To the Ungodly.

2. To the Godly.

1. To the Ungodly; my work with them shall
be to perswade and direct them, how to get into
this peaceful and blessed state: Amongst the ungod-
ly,

1. There are some who are *far from the King-
dom of Heaven*; as,

1. Those upon whom the Ministry of the Gospel
hath *done nothing at all*; that miserable forlorn mul-
titude of the *grossly ignorant*; who as they were born
blind, have had all their dayes such a mist of thick
darkness abiding upon them, that they are unca-
pable, without a miracle, of being savingly wrought
upon. Speak unto them of Faith in Christ, of Re-
pentance unto life, of obeying the Gospel, in the
plainest way possible; and you will be as a *Barbarian*
to them, as one of a strange Language, they know
not what you say; if you should speak *Greek or La-
tine* to them, they would understand it as well, as the
plainest truths of the Gospel: A poor Minister of
Christ may break his heart; and rend his bowels, in
mourning over them; may draw forth his Soul in
the most melting expressions of his compassions to
them, may break his brains, in studying how to con-
vey a little light unto them, and yet cannot help
them, cannot make them to understand so much, as
that they understand nothing. Their minds are so
wholly blinded by the God of this world, that the
light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, though it
shine round about them, cannot find so much as a
cranny into their hearts; but being alienated from

the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, they give up themselves to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness; walking in the lusts of their hearts, after the course of this World, in riot, luxury, excess of Wine, revellings, banquetings, covetousness, lying, blasphemies, and abominable adulteries; and Idolatries; and yet remain without any conscience of sin, or fear of their danger; being as natural brut Beasts, as if they were made for slaughter and destruction.

Are there none such in this place? Doth not the Earth every where groan, our Land mourn, our Congregations travel in pain? Is not this Congregation black'd and burthen'd with such miserable creatures; who after all the instructions, counsels, wooing, warnings, threatnings and Judgments of God, which have been in their ears, and before their eyes, remain to this day a stupid, blockish, brutish generation, without the least sense of their sin, or wish to be delivered from it?

Oh you blind and dark Souls, consider and understand, if it be possible, these two Scriptures, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost. In whom the god of this World hath blinded the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine unto them.* This darkness is from Hell; the Prince of darkness hath held you under your blindness; and this darkness leads to hell, to the blackness of darkness for ever: You are lost, you are lost Souls, lost for ever, if the Gospel leave you in this state of blindness in which you have so securely continued to this day. *Isa. 27. 11. It is a people of no understanding; therefore be that*
made

made them will not have mercy on them, so that for now
 them will shew them no favour.

2. Those upon whom the Gospel hath seemed to
 have done its work ; but it is its *strange work*.

There are two works which the Gospel doth :
 some it enlightens ; others it smites with blindness :
 some it softens ; others it seals up under hardness :
 some it gains over to Christ ; others it gives up to
 the unbelief and impenitence of their hearts. *Iſa. 6.*
10. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their
ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they see with their
eyes, &c. Go and preach to this people, but preach
 them into hardness and blindness : because they re-
 fused to see or hear, let the light put out their eyes ;
 let the joyful sound strike them deaf, and stop their
 ears : never leave hammering them, till thou hast
 hammered them into *rocks*, or *anvills*. Some there
 are that have so trifled with Convictions, baffled
 Conscience, and suffer'd their lusts so to resist and
 bear down their light ; that have had so many heats
 and colds, so many thawings and freezings ; that
 have taken up so many purposes, and made so many
 promises, and yet all comes to nothing ; that the
 Gospel hath received a Charge from the Lord, to
 make an end of its work : Go, sayes God, and make
 an end with these men ; I'll be mocked by them no
 more ; I'll be trifled and dallied with by them no
 longer, wound them no more, fright them no more :
 persuade them no longer, make their hearts
 fat, their ears heavy and shut their eyes, and give
 them up to their hearts lusts, that they may walk in
 their own counsels, and fill up the measure of their
 iniquities.

you, that after all the warnings you have received from the Lord, and after some workings of them, sometimes upon your Consciences, are yet going after your lusts, prostituting your selves to your bel-
laine and sensual pleasures, filling up daily the measure of your iniquities. Oh tremble and consider sadly, whether this be not likely to be your case; that the Gospel hath even done with you, and given you over unto an impenitent heart, and reprobate mind. In hope, that how near soever you are to this dreadful state, you may be yet one step at least short of it, I shall this once more adventure a few words upon you, together with them that I have already mentioned: And first let me reason a little with you.

Art thou one of them that obey the Gospel, or not? Art thou one of them that love God, one of the called according to his purpose, or not? Art thou not an Alien, an adversary against God, & a Rebel against his Word? Let thy Conscience speak, let thy ways speak, let thine Oaths, and thy Drunkenness, and thine Adulteries, thy scoffing at God, and his holy ways, thy hating his Instructions, and kicking at his Reproofs, thy hardnings against his Calls, thy treacherous dealings in his Covenant, and the Vows of God that are upon thee; let these speak what thou art: Is this that which God hath chosen and called thee to? Are these the Things thou hast learned, and received, and heard of him? Did he ever say, *These things do, O the God of peace shall be with you?* Thou needest no other Conviction, than that of *Isaiah*, *Jer. 3. 23.* How canst thou say, *I am not polluted?* See thy way in the valley, it knoweth what thou hast done. How canst thou say, that thou art not a Wretch? With what Face canst thou depy, but thou art an Enemy

of God, and of all Righteousness? See thy way in the Valley, trace the Foot-steps of thy Life; behold thy practices and thy course: Sure thou art very blind; if thou behold thy self in this Glass, and dost not see thy Face, as the Face of a Devil.

There are some, whom it may be harder work to convince, who have the Face of a Christian, the Tongue of a Saint, but within, the heart of a Beast. Hypocrites are as hard to be convinced, as Hypocrisie is hard to be detected.

But thou who carryest thy wicked Heart in thy Forehead, upon thy Tongue, upon the Palms of thine Hands, and in the very prints of thy Feet, whose Malice against God and his Holiness, may be read in every look, in every word, in every Line of thy life; needest thou any further proof, that thou art not of God? Thou mayst as well put me to prove, that *Hell* is not *Heaven*, that the *Devil* is no *Saint*, as that thou art no Christian. Dost *thou* love God, art thou under the hope of the Promise? Ask thy ways man, and let these tell thee.

2. Dost thou mean to keep at this distance from God to the Death? Dost thou in earnest? Is there nothing in those rich Promises, that have been laid before thee, which thou canst with 'twere thine? Is there no such word in thine heart, *Oh that my Lot were here!* Art thou content thy name should be left out for ever? Is there so little in the peace of God, that thou canst sell it for the pleasures of sin? Art thou content that nothing should prosper with thee, but that every thing should be a Gin, and a Snare, and a Curse to thee? Art thou content that the Pit should be thy place, Eternal Wrath thy Portion, and that every Creature, every Comfort, every Cross that

comes should give thee a pluck down from Heaven, and a kick towards Hell? canst thou think they mean thee any thing else, when all does but harden thee in thy sin, and make thee kick against thy God? Art thou so unwilling to leave thy sins, for the hope of the Promise of God, that thou art content to give up thy hopes, for the love of thy sins? Darest thou say, *Let me have my part in the pleasures and contentments of this life, and I am contented to relinquish my part in Christ? Let God let me alone in my sins, and let him damn my Soul? Let me live at my ease, and my liberty, and let my name be blotted out of the Book of Life: I am content to take my place, and my lot, among the damned in another world so I have my pleasure with them in this world?* And dost thou say less, or other than this, whilest thou refusest, or resolvest against following thy God? He that refuses to accept of the Redemption of Christ, upon the holy Terms, upon which 'tis offer'd, says, in effect, I am lost, I am sold for a Captive to the Devil; my first Father sold me for an Apple, Christ would now buy me back again to my self: but for my part, I am content that the first Bargain stand: As to my interest, I confirm the Bargain: As for my Soul being sold to the Devil, to the Devil let it go. This is the voice of every wilful Refuser of the Terms of the Gospel. Oh Wretch does not thy heart tremble? does not thy hair stand on end? do not thy knees shake? and are not the Joints of thy Loins loosed, to consider, what thou hast done, and art still a doing?

Sinners, I have but a little more to speak to you, but shall that little be nothing? Hitherto you have stood it out, and will not be perswaded, by ought that God hath spoken by me: But oh! must I leave you thus?

thus? Why may not a word speaking, do more than
 all that hath been spoken? Oh that it might! Shall
 neither my first, nor last words prevail with you?
 What if [my] last, should be [your] last? If the
 last that I must preach, be the last that you must
 hear? There is a day set, that will be your last day:
 There is a Sabbath, that will be your last Sabbath;
 There is Sermon, that will be your last Sermon:
 There is a VVarning, that will be your last warning:
 Oh what if this should be it? If the Lord should
 take your *this dayes denial*, for your *final An-*
swer, and never ask your consent again for ever? But
 whether it be your last, or no, I must be henceforth
 silent to you? And oh will you send me away with
 so sad an Heart, with the sorrow and shame of the
 disappointed? Will you break my Heart, by persisting
 to harden yours? Is this all I shall have, to re-
 turn to the Lord, that sent me unto you? I have
 declared thy Name unto them, but they did not re-
 gard it: I have invited them to come to thee, but
 they would not follow me; I have warned them to
 return from their sins, but they would not hearken:
 Are you willing that I shall give in this Answer,
 and bear this Witness against you at the Great Day?
 sinners hearken; is there not one blind person among
 you, that is yet willing to have his Eyes open'd? Is
 there not one Captive to Lust & Vanity, that is wil-
 ling to be set free from his Bondage? Is there not
 one more that will be perswaded to be wise, and to
 prefer an immortal Soul, God, Glory, Eternity, be-
 fore his brutish perishing pleasures? Is there not
 one Drunkard more, that will yet be perswaded to
 be sober? Not one vain person that will be perswa-
 ded to be serious? Am I making my last Draught
 among

among you, and shall I take nothing? Not one Soul more? If you will not yet be prevailed with, then hear the Word of the Lord, Ezek. 3. 19. *If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, he shall dye in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.*

But if there be any few relenting hearts among you, who are brought but thus far, to cry out, *Why what must I do?* I would leave with such, these few words of counsel, and oh that my counsel might be accepted by them.

1. Get a deep sense of thy dreadful state: What art thou sinner? What is thy state? at ease? in peace? out of fear? in pleasure? What, and yet a sinner? In the bond of iniquity? Captive to the Devil? without Christ? without the Promise? under the curse? Study these Scriptures, Job. 8. 34. *He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin,* vers. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil,* 2 Tim. 2. 26. *Held captive by him at his will.* Act. 8. 23. *In the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.* 1 Joh. 4. 19. *The world lyeth in wickedness.* Pl. 116. *Upon the wicked he shall reign Snarers, Flies, and Brimstone, and an horrible Tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup.* Plal. 49. 15. *Like Sheep they are laid in the Grave, Death shall feed upon them.*

Rise Sampson, the Philistines are upon thee; awake sleeper, the Devil is upon thee, Death is at thy back, the Gin is at thy heel, the Curse is over thy head, the very next step may be Hell; Thou lyest in wickedness to day, & mayst be in fire and brimstone before to morrow: Sure thou art in a dead sleep, that canst take thine ease in such a Lodging. Is this the state thou art so loath to change? Is this the state thou so boastest of, and bledest thy self in? When thine heart is merry with thy Wine, swel'd with thy pride,

pride, jollity amongst thy Companions : put in such a serious Question : *But what am I all this while?* Let this thought, sawce thy sweet Moriel, spice thy pleasant Cups, &c be the Burthen of thy merry Songs; After this, Hell, Snare, Fire and Brimstone, the Vengeance of Eternal Fire. Oh an Heaven, a Paradise, oh my dear pleasures, oh my sweet Laughter, oh merry dayes, what Mortal can part with you? I but what comes after? What is there at the bottom? Look a little before thee, and if that sight turn not thy stomack, sure thou art sufficiently hardy.

Study thy case, and tremble; and when thou tremblest, there's hope thou wilt turn. Think not of Repentance, or escaping from thy sinful state, till thou see and fear it. We read, *Isa. 42. 7.* that Christ was sent, *to open the blind eyes, and to bring out the Prisoners out of Prison.* If the Prisoners eyes be shut, 'tis to little purpose that the Prison doors be open: Their Eyes must be first open'd, not only that they may see their way [out] but that they may see themselves [in] Prison. Open thine Eyes, Sinner, if ever thou wilt escape; open thine Eyes, and see where thou art? Thy Fools Paradise, wherein thou blest thy self, is thy Souls Prison, where thou art like to be held under Eternal Bondage.

2. Give a present Bill of Divorce to every sin; hug not Deareh one minute longer in thy Bosom: If thou lovest thy Life, say not of any one sin, *Nothing but Deareh shall part thee and me:* No, not so much as this, *Tet a little while, and I will let thee go. To day, to day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

4. Dread it as Hell, that thy hope in Christ, should lessen thy fear of sin. Let not thy hope of a

Saviour be thy damnation. Make not Christ the *Pander of sin*; continue not in sin because Grace hath abounded.

4. Break off from thy Companions in sin; wilt thou love them to the death? Christ and thy Soul can never be married, till thy Soul and Sinners be parted. Escape for thy life, get thee up from the Tents of these men; linger not. Thou art held under the power of the Devil, by *cords*, and by *knots*; by the cords of thy *sinnes*, and by the knots of thy *Companions*. There's no hope that the cords of sin will be broken, till the knots of evil Companions be loosed. Sinner, these *binding Cords* will, if thou look not to it, become *whip cords* to torment thee. Oh take heed thou never come to be lashed with such knotted cords!

Thy Companions in sin, as they now heighten thy pleasures, so will they hereafter sharpen thy plagues. Sinners comfort their hearts with this thought, That if they be damned, they shall have store of company; but let them know, That the fire of Hell will burn just so much the cooler, for the multitudes that are there; as the fire of their Chimney does, for the store of fuel. When thou art charmed with the roaring of thy Companion in the Ale-house, think what musick their roaring with thee will make, when you shall all meet in your eternal Prison. Away from evil company; you will remember hereafter, when 'tis too late, how much, and with how little success, I have laboured with you in this thing.

5. Baffle not Conscience once more. Awakened Sinner, Charm not thy Conscience into silence, nor dash it out of countenance. Thy Conscience is the

the only Friend that God or the Soul hath left within thee. Thy will, and thy affections, and thine appetite, are all gone; the Devil hath stoln them away, and hired them all against thee, thou hast nothing but poor Conscience left.

Thy Conscience hath been often upon the pleading with thee for God, and for pity to thy Soul: It hath warned thee, reproved thee, and often whisper'd thee in thine Ear? What dost thou mean? whither art thou going? when wilt thou return? Away with thy sins, have done with thy Companions, no more of this drunkenness, this riot, this covetousness; Thou art a lost man, thy Soul is lost, if thou go on. Thus Conscience hath warned thee, and thou hast sometimes hearkned to it, and spoken it fair. The throbs, and the pangs, and the wounds thou hast felt and received from it, have wrung from thee, now and then, a promise: Well, through the Grace of God; I'll hearken to Conscience, I'll be a new man: Away from me ye sinners, I will keep the Commandments of my God. And yet shortly after, when thy Temptations return, thy Companions come, all's forgotten; and along thou goest, as a fool to the Stocks, or an Ox to the slaughter; and this hath been thy way and thy manner, from time to time: Now and then Conscience draws a sigh, or a tear from thee; and by and by receives a kick or a stab.

Beware Sinner; Conscience will not alwayes be thus us'd. If ever it speak again, say it not Nay; It's next word may be it's last; if ever thou weariest it into perpetual silence, then farewell all for ever. Conscience is the only Friend thou hast left.

Convinced

Convinced Soul ! How wilt thou bear the revenges of an awakened abused Conscience ? all thy buffings of it here will be repeated over in eternity : How will all this look when it shall meet thee before thy Judge ? Save thy self from that hour : Baffle not Conscience once more.

6. Let not the greatness of thy sins, nor the difficulty of Christs terms, hinder, or discourage thee, from making a present close with Christ. Say not, his Yoke is too heavy, his Cross is too grievous for me to bear; or my sins are too great for him to bear. Set the Throne against the Yoke, the Crown against the Cross, infinite Merit and Mercy, against mighty sins; and go unto Jesus, cast thy self on his bloud, and bowels, and put thy self under his Yoke and Scepter. If he will give Life to thee, be content that he give Laws to thee: and as ever thou expectest to live by him, be resolved to live to him, and no longer to thy self. Go to Jesus, and when thou goest, take with thee these two Scriptures, *Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest; Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and you shall find rest unto your souls. Joh. 6. 37. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.*

7. Fall close to Duties, and keep close to Ordinances.

1. Let secret, and Family Prayer be thy daily exercise. Count not thy self a Christian, till thou give thy self to prayer.

2. Let not reading the Word, Catechising, &c. be strangers in thy house.

3. Prize, improve, and sanctifie the Sabbaths; The Lord on those dayes comes down upon his Mount,

to meet thy Soul, to commune with thee, to bless thee, to feed thee, and fill thee with whatsoever thy Soul desireth or wanteth. Get thee up to meet thy God: But remember when thou goest, leave thy staff behind thee.

4. View often, and take an account of thy self, of the in-come and success of all thy Duties: What is all my praying, reading, hearing, &c. come to? What is brought forth? Is the work done, for which all these are? Are my Sins and my Soul parted? Are my Companions in sin abandoned? Is Christ and my Soul united? Beware you never make Praying, and Hearing, to serve you instead of believing, and Repenting. But to help you on to it.

Remember these seven Words when I am gone.

1. Get a sense of thy dreadful state.
2. Abandon presently every sin.
3. Let not thy hope in Christ lessen thy fear of sin.
4. Shake off every sinful Companion.
5. Baffle not Conscience once more.
6. Make a present close with Christ.
7. Fall close to Duties, and keep close to Ordinances.

These things do, and the God of peace shall be with you: But remember, *There's no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

2. There are others that are near the Kingdom of God. Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God. There are some that are like Ephraim, Hosea 7, 8. Cakes half baked; like Agrippa, almost Christians; Acts 26, 29. Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian; Isaiah, Thou hast brought me within a li-

tle

de of Christianity. They are come to the threshold of saving Faith, within a step of sincere Godliness. They have been professing, and praying, and hoping, and wishing themselves in, and yet are short of it. They have been enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, have tasted of the heavenly gift, have felt something of the sweetness of Christ, have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of many excellent and useful gifts, have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the World to come. They have set out after Christ, have left the blind and prophane VVorld much behind them, have escaped much of the pollutions of this VVorld, left many sins, taken up with many duties, have a name among the Saints, have suffered many things for the Name of Christ, and notwithstanding all this, here they stick, they cannot give themselves up fully to Christ; something or other, either the VVorld, or their Companions, or their pleasures, or their ease, or their sloth hath such hold on them, that they cannot, *unreservedly, resolvedly*, give themselves up to the dominion of Jesus Christ, nay, it may be, they cannot tell why, yet they cannot do it. Though they can say, I would be, yet they cannot say, I will be the Lord's. These are near the Kingdome of God, but yet short of it. He that cannot say, *I will be*, can less say, *I am the Lords*.

But here I must distinguish of two sorts of *almost Christians*.

1. There are some that have reached to *almost*, and are still reaching forwards: the state of such is hopeful, though it be not safe. Oh that we could see more such *almost Christians*!

2. There

2. There are others that have reached to, and rest in *almost*; who mistaking *almost*, for *altogether*, do there take up their stand. These are far from the Kingdome of God.

Brethren, I much fear, that among the number of Professors, there are more of these *almost* Christians, than we are aware of: Oh it would make our hearts shake to consider, how far many go, to what degree of resignation, resolution, affection, action, submission to sufferings, they attain; and yet fall off at last, and thereby shew they were still short of Christ; *They went out from us, because they were not of us.*

I particularly pity many of the more sober Gentry, who have a good will to Religion, and a fair respect for the Professors of it; countenancing holiness, doing many worthy things for the Name and Servants of God; refraining from the viciousness, and vanity of many of their Rank and Quality; who yet dwelling in temptations, being entangled in carnal correspondencies, entertained with an affluence of carnal delights and pleasures; and finding hereby a strict self-denying and mortified life, to be of greater difficulty to them, than to men of lower rank, are apt to think it not of such necessity; who may possibly upon a narrow enquiry discern, after all their good hopes of themselves, and the great opinions of others concerning them, that they are yet short of that simplicity and godly sincerity, which alone will prove them Christians indeed.

Blessed be God there are amongst us such, those who have broken through all temptations, have adventured upon the disobliging all the World; have laid down their honours, pleasures, friends, and all

their carnal interests whatsoever, at the feet of Christ; and preferring a close Communion with God, the peace of a good Conscience, the joyes of Religion, yea the very reproach of Christ above all their worldly Honours, and fleshly pleasures, have given themselves up to the power of the Gospel, and an exemplary Spiritual and Heavenly life. But it is to be feared, lest there be also such, who have deservedly gain'd great respect among the Saints, and gone far along with them, who yet are come but to the threshold of Christianity; and being afraid to put in, there they are in danger to perish everlastingly. *Quod fere fit non fit*, He that is but almost saved, is damned for altogether.

Oh Friends, what do you mean? will you lose all the ground you have gotten, all the things you have wrought? shall all your sufferings for the name of Christ be lost, and in vain? after you have tasted the bitterness of the Cross, will you not go one step farther, and take the joyes of the Cross? Is the work of Regeneration brought to the Birth, and shall it at last miscarry, and prove an abortion? would one step more land your Soules in the Kingdom of God, are you gotten so near a shore, and will you perish in the Harbour? Are you gotten off from the tents of the Edomites, and gotten even to the borders of Canaan, and will you not enter? Are you gotten to Pisgab, and have a view of the Land of Promise, and see that it is a good Land? are you come so near as to see, that true holiness is such a beautiful State, such a blessed State? and do you wish your selves in, and will you yet die on the other side *Jordan*? you have prayed; put on, a little more prayer may do it: you have laboured, and reasoned with, and persuaded

swaded your hearts; give not over, a little more labour may prevail. Oh that I knew what to say more, that might bring you on. Oh that the Lord would yet put one word or other in my mouth, that might overcome you! that I might shoot one Arrow more, that might strike home; use one Argument more, that might be cogent, and gain your full consent to Christ; that I might see you safely landed ere I be parted from you. Oh think, think what a dreadful disappointment this will be for you, that are come so near to godliness, as that you verily think you have attained it; if after all the joys, pleasures and hopes, the little Religion you have had, hath fed you withal; you should at last have a **TEREL** written for your doom, and hear that cutting word pronounced upon you, *Thou art weighed in the ballance, and art found wanting.* With you also would I leave a few words;

1. Lose not both Worlds: this World thou hast lost already, by leaving them so much behind thee; lose not that which is before, for want of coming on a little farther: think not of hanging always betwixt Heaven and Hell; In the other World there's no middle, either go back, or come on, turn thee to the right hand or to the left.

2. Mistake not *almost*, for *altogether*, such a mistake may be mortal. Do not too easily conclude, thou hast already attained; if thou takest something of Christianity to be all, thy all is nothing. 'Tis a wonderful thing, to see how easily men satisfy themselves in a matter of such weight and intricacy. Thine heart is deceitful, try it thoroughly before thou trust it. One grain too light, and thou art un-

done. God, Glory, Soul, Eternity, all lie at stake, one rittle short of sincerity, and all lost. Be jealous of thy self, never give over suspecting thy State, till thou hast put it past suspicion: Conclude not, till thou hast thoroughly disputed the case, give not over the dispute, till the matter be no longer disputable. Canst thou be too sure? the least mistake is as wide as Heaven and Hell; the bottomless Gulf reaches home to the Threshold of glory; thy *tantum non*, will be as much as the Devil looks for, only not in, though never so near, will be thy eternal perdition.

3. Beware that this thought, *one time or other, I shall have more power*, slacken not thy present care and labour. Let not thy hopes undo thee. Lose not a present opportunity, in hopes of future ability. Labour each day to bring the matter to a *present* Issue: and that with no less earnestness, than if this day were to give a final determination, and thou wert sure, that thou wert just come, to thy *now or never*.

4. Let not a small matter part Christ and thee. Heaven may not cost thee half so much more as it hath cost thee already. Art thou come within one penny of thy Lords price, and shall that break the bargain?

5. Let not thy Oyl thou hast gotten, serve only for Jewel, for thy fire. Let not thy common grace thou hast obtained here, be of no other use, but to add to thy confusion hereafter: every beam of light that hath shined to thee here, will add to the horror of thine everlasting darkness. Every drop of Honey thou hast tasted in Religion, will be thy Gall and Worm-wood, in the day of thy condemnation.

Be

Be not more miserable hereafter, for that thou hast been less wicked here ; the remembrance how fast thou wert once for Glory, will be one of the sharpest Teeth of thine everlasting Worm.

6. Lastly, Be all or nothing ; come up hither, or get thee down to thy lot, particularly,

1. *Be all unto Christ.*
2. *Let Christ be all to thee.*
3. *Let all Christ be accepted and improved by thee.*

1. Be all unto Christ ; have none to please but Christ, and for Christ ; have nothing to seek but Christ, and for Christ ; resolve against *Reserves* and *limits* ; give up all, and keep back nothing ; say not thus much I can spare, and no more ; thither I will go, and no farther. Divide not thy self, thy love, thy care, thy aims, betwixt Christ and any thing else. Let thy whole Soul run in one Channel. Rest not short of a full resignation, and when thou hast resigned, repent not.

2. Let Christ be all to thee ; say not, I must have an Estate too, my Friends too, my pleasures and my ease too, let Christ be enough, and all to thee ; Father, Mother, House, Lands, Portion ; say considering all thou hast else, Be thou mine Lord, and let these go their way.

3. Let all of Christ be accepted and improved by thee. Divide not thy self, and divide not Christ ; leave not any thing of thy self, for any but Christ, refuse not any thing of Christ, for thy self. Think not *thy all*, too much for thee to give, nor *Christ's all*, too much for thee to embrace. Thy half will not satisfy Christ, nor will half of Christ suffice thee. Thou must give and have, and therefore resolve

to give and take, all or none. Let all Christ be accepted, and improved by thee.

1. The merit of his blood.
2. The light and Authority of his Law.
3. The Power of his Spirit.

1. Accept the merit of his blood; renounce thine own, and rely on his righteousness; as God hath, so do thou, lay on him, all thine iniquities. Think not of *Satisfaction*, without *satisfaction*. Think not to satisfy in the least, by ought that thou canst do, let that lye upon him. Judge thy self, but seek to be justified alone through Faith in his blood. Say unto the Lord, what I owe to thee, put it upon his account; my Christ must answer for me.

2. Accept and submit to the light and authority of his Law. Think not, he is thy *Priest*, unless he be thy *Prophet*, and thy *King*. If he must answer for thee, let him instruct thee, and be thou willing to learn of him; since he hath bought thee, let him govern thee; say not of any thing he requires, *this is too much to do*, since he said none to thee, *this too much to do*. Count not thy self a Christian, whilst thou art unwilling to receive the utmost light, or to submit to the utmost of thy duty; say not of any one thing, of all that Christ requires, *This I must have abated*, and then I will be his.

3. Accept and exert the power of his Spirit; the Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of Power. The same Argument which the Apostle uses to prove himself a Minister of Christ, is necessary to prove thee a Christian. 2 Cor. 13. 14. *Since ye seek a proof*

of Christ speaking in me, which to you ward is not weak but is mighty in you. Though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God; for we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God. (Ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me,) ye put me to prove that I am a Minister of Christ; why, here's the proof of it, My preaching hath not been weak, but mighty in you; It hath been followed and attested by the power of Christ, which hath wrought mightily in you; as weak as we are, yet the power of Christ hath been manifested and magnified in us. Dost thou seek a proof of thy Christianity? why, here must be the proof, that though thou art weak of thy self, yet thou livest in the power of God, which is mighty in thee. Though thou canst do nothing of thy self, yet thou art able to do all things through Christ which strengthens thee.

Thou sayst, thou art willing, but thou art weak; thou desirest to be, and to do, what God would have thee, but thou canst not perform.

This may comfort and support thee much under thy failings and miscarriages in some particular duties; but if this be thy case in ordinary, in the main of thy life; that to will is all thou hast, thou art not a Christian. He that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his: And he that hath the Spirit of Christ, it is in him as the living power of God, actually carrying him on in an holy life, Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes; and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them.

I will not only command, perswade, incline you, but *cause* you. It shall be done, my Spirit shall bring you on, and help you through. Ye shall keep my Statutes, and do them. Where-ever the Spirit of God hath breathed in the life of grace, there are more than breathings out after a gracious life. Sincere grace hath more in it, than wishings and wouldings, than attempts and overtures. Life is a power to act. *Philiz. 12, 13. Work out your salvation, for it is God that worketh in you, to will and to do.* Where-ever God worketh the *re velle*, he works also the *re operari*. Where-ever God works in, he gives us a power to work out the works of Christianity. Oh rest not, till thou find thy self endued with this power from on high, & enabled to go through with thy work: They are not thy *Attempts*, but thy *Achievements*; they are not thy *Offers* at an *holy life*, but thy *doing it*, that must prove thee a Christian; *He that doth righteousness, is righteous.*

Be it thus with thee; be all to Christ, let Christ be all to thee; let all Christ be accepted and improved by thee; heartily accept the merit of Christ's Righteousness, submit to the light and authority of his Law; get thy self possessed with, and live in the power of his Spirit; be in thus with thee, come up higher, and then thou art safe: Thy *almost* is now come to *altogether*; and if I must now leave thee, thou wilt be the better able to spare me: *These things do, and the God of peace shall be with thee.* Thou art gotten into Sanctuary: and now what-ever Tossings and Tumblings, what-so-ever unpleasing or afflicting changes may be thy lot in this World, thou mayst sing that *Requiem* to thy self, *Return unto thy rest, O my Soul.*

Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee: Go thy way, eat thy Bread with joy, and drink thy Wine with amerry heart, for God now accepteth thee.

Though thou walkest through the shadow of Death, thou may'st now sit thee down under the shadow of thy Lord, with great delight, and with great security, whose fruit shall be ever sweet to thy taste: Though thou dwellest in Mesek, and hast thy Habitation among the Tents of Kedar, yet thou may'st lay thee down in peace and take thy rest, for the Lord doth, the Lord will make thee to dwell in safety.

2. To the Godly.

Happy Souls, The God of Peace is with you, all things shall work for good to you; only that he may continue with you, continue you with him in the obedience of that Gospel, to which you have delivered up your selves.

My Exhortation to you shall be.

1. General; Respecting the whole course of your Lives.

2. Particular; Respecting your daily Walk.

My general Exhortation shall be bottomed on that of the Apostle, Phil. 1. 27, 28. Let your Conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may bear of your Affaires, that you stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel. In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of Salvation, and that of God.

[Let

[*Let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel.*] Walk worthy of the Gospel; let your lives be suitable, and answerable to the Holy Gospel which you profess.

1. Let your lives answer *the ends* of the Gospel, the exaltation of the Name, and glorious Grace of God in Christ; live an humble, self-denying, self-abasing; this is a Christ exalting life.

2. Let your life answer *the Dignities*, and Honours the Gospel invests you with. You are the children of God, the Heirs of Glory, the Spouse of Christ, the Bride, the Lambs Wife: You are a Royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar people; know your priviledges, and do not live below your selves; defile not your glory, by stooping to a Carnal and Earthly Life: a Jewel is not more unbecoming a Swines snout, than fleshly Husks a Saints Palate: 'Tis below you, who are peculiar people to your God, to live in common with the Men of this World: humble your selves into the least of Saints, but do not humble your selves into Bruits: Live in the Spirit, converse with God, be dealing for Glory, Honour, and Immortality.

3. Let your Lives answer *the Names*, which the Gospel puts upon you; *Doves, Lambs, Lillies*; be harmless, peaceable, gentle, beautiful, fragrant, sending forth a precious savour in the World.

4. Let your Lives answer *the Riches*, the Reward, the Crown, the Kingdom, which the Gospel sets before you.

Live a *contented life*, be satisfied, be well pleased, with what you have here, be it little or much; disgrace not your portion, the Gospel allots you, as if it were

be a poor insufficient portion : Let your souls
say, *How small an handful forever you have of this
earth, it is enough, Christ is mine :* A discontented
Christian says, *Christ is not enough, Heaven is not
enough :* Let the Conspiration of thy Spirit, declare
before the World, that *the Lines are fallen to thee in
a pleasant place, and that thou hast a goodly heritage :*
Do not put this Scorn upon God, and Glory, that
thou must be beholding to the Devil, to mend thy
portion.

Christian, either thou art within the Promise, or
a stranger from it : Either thou hast the God of
Peace with thee, or not : If not, me-thinks thou
shouldst find other matter to take up thy thoughts,
and not have leasure to perplex thy self with every
trivial want ; that thy meat, or thy drink, or thine
house, or the carriage of thy friends towards thee,
are not according to thy mind ; thy Soul, thy Soul
man, thy life is in danger. Oh what an Eternity art
thou like to have of it ? Canst thou want a God, a
Christ, an Heaven, and thine heart never stir at it ?
And is the dissatisfaction of thy vain mind or appe-
tite such a Burthen ? Is the Devil in thy heart, and
it never moves thee ? and shall an ill neighbour be
a vexation to thee ? Canst thou feel a Feather, when
thou hast a Talent upon thee ? The Curse, the Curse
of God is upon thee : I cannot wonder [thou]
shouldst be discontent ; but me-thinks these small
matters, by a man in thy case, should not be mind-
ed.

If Christ and the Promise be thine, is not that e-
nough ? Are not all things enough ? God is all things ;
He that hath the son, hath not only, with him, but in
him, all things ; Are all things nothing with thee ?
what

What wouldst thou have more than all ?
Heathens acknowledged, *That vertue is sufficient*
was a *Maximo* among the ancient Philosophers
summa in apri, Vertue is self-sufficient : A vertue
Man hath no need to be beholding either
Friends or Fortune : He hath enough in himself. The
Apostle tells us, That *Godliness, just wrapped*
with its *self-sufficiency, is great gain*, 1 Tim. 6. 6. Solomon
tells us, *Prov. 14. 14. A good man is satisfied*
from himself. He hath that within him, out of which
his satisfaction grows. A Christian hath the whole
Gospel within him, He hath Christ, the Promise
the everlasting God, Heaven, Glory, within him.
As rich as he is, he may truly say, *Omnia mea mecum*
porto. He carries his *All* in his heart, and can therefore
get out a living, a Sufficiency for all Times, Cases
and Wants : Cast him naked out of his Habitation
out of his Countrey, yet he carries all with him; he
leaves not an Hoof behind him.

Christians, leave it to the poor of the Earth, to
carnal men, (the Riches of them is poor enough)
leave it them to be discontent : A carnal Man hath
so many to be beholding to, to parch up his content-
ment, that tis no wonder he falls short of it, the Sun,
the Clouds, his Fields, his Folds, his Friends, his Ene-
mies, his Honours, his Pleasures, his Meat, his Drink,
his House, his Mony, yea, the Devil & all, & his lusts,
every Creature must come in with their part, to con-
tribute to his contentment : if but one thing fails
him, there's something wanting to make it up : Nay,
if none fail, but they all do their best to please him,
yet all will not do, *in the fulness of his sufficiency he is*
in straits. When he hath all he can have, his still hun-
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ing Heart cries out of what it hath, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.* Leave it to these Christians, who have nothing but emptiness to fill their Souls with; leave it to them to be discontented. Will you give the same imputation upon the God of Glory? The Discontent of a Christian, is a kind of blasphemy: it proclaims concerning God also, and the Glory of the Gospel, This also is Vanity: *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.*

Christians, study your Riches more, count over your Treasures; dwell more in your God, and his Gospel; Read over your Priviledges, Promises, and Hopes; feed more on that Bread of Life, drink more freely of those Living Springs, which are broken forth to you: Prove more what Godliness hath in it: Get out the sweetness and the Pleasure of it, (none in the World live such a voluptuous Life, as he that lives most with God) get out the pleasure of Godliness, lie more at the Breasts, suck harder, press the Clusters, and the Wine and Milk will come; make the most of Religion, and you will have enough: never blame it for empty, or unsatisfactory, while there is more to be had.

Go not into other Pastures, run not from Flower to Flower, keep you Home: Let not your God find you in another Field: If you keep with God, the less you have of Creature-vanities, the more full will your Contentment be, Christian, Honour thy God and his Gospel, let his Breasts satisfy thee, and err thou alwayes in his Love. Let the World read the Gospel-sufficiency in thy Souls pleasure, and satisfaction with it alone.

3. Let your Conversations answer the *support* of the Gospel, and its succours. Live a *patient* life. Jam. 5. 7. *Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.* Patience is a Grace suited to our present Gospel state. I will call it, a *Friend that's born for the day of adversity*. If you are Christians, you have need of *Patience*: and if you have *Patience*, you need no more. Jam. 1. 4. *Let Patience have her perfect work, that you may be entire, lacking nothing.*

Patience, is a submitting, sedate, and calm frame of spirit, whereby a Christian, from Gospel grounds, is born up under all his Troubles, and born through all his Duties.

Between *Patience* and *Contentedness*, there is this difference; *Contentedness* is the quiet of the heart, and its satisfaction with its *smallest portion of good things*. *Patience* is the quiet of the heart under the *greatest pressure of evil things*.

A *patient spirit* is a *submitting spirit*: Its heartily content that God should have his Will. With whatever God is pleased, it will not be displeased. *It's the Lord, let him do whatsoever seems good in his Eyes.* What seems good in God's eyes, shall not seem evil in mine.

It is a *Calm and quiet spirit*: It will not strive nor cry, nor lift up its voice in the streets; it can *mourn*, but it does not *murmur*; It can *feel*, but it will not *fight* at the hand of God. A patient person is ever *compos mentis*; has the command and government of his spirit; keeps it sober, and in due order; doth not rave, and rage. Impatience is a kind of frenzy; such persons are *besides themselves*. In our patience we possess, and by our impatience we lose our Souls: we lose the rule and government of them, the peace and

and the use of them. An impatient man is besides himself, both as a Man and as a Christian.

1. He is besides himself *as a Man*: Impatience turns Reason out of doors; and for the Affections, they are all in an uproar, and will know no command or government.

2. He is besides himself *as a Christian*; turned quite out of course: Duties, Comforts, Experiences, Hopes, all are laid aside. Keep you quiet, keep the peace in your heart, and you keep your heart.

In this calmness and quietness, *it bears up under troubles*. Patience hath Fortitude in it, it neither frets nor faints, under all its burthens. Christians [must] bear, and patient Christians [can] bear any thing that comes on them. The proper exercise of patience, is *enduring*: he endures not that suffers only, but that can bear what he suffers.

It bears through its Duties: The passion of a patient person doth not hinder his action. He holds his course, keeps on his way, whatever load he hath on his back. He (runs) with patience, the race which is set before him; he is not discouraged nor diverted from his holy course by any suffering it costs him.

And indeed, Christian Patience stands not in a bare forced quiet, in a biring in, or keeping down, our fretting restuations, from venting themselves in word or carriage, or in a sullen silence or stupidity; but in the maintaining such a tranquillity of spirit, under all we suffer, as that we can still, both enjoy and serve the Lord. He is a patient Christian, that is as much a Christian in a storm as in a calm; that can pray, believe, love, bless God, follow God, and keep his way, when he smites, as when he smiles.

Lastly,

Lastly, in all this, a Christian is upheld and carried on, from Gospel Grounds. 'Tis not a natural hardness or apathy, 'tis not the Spirit of a man that does sustain his infirmities; 'tis upon the everlasting Gospel that he stands.

There are three Things especially, that bear him through. His viewing,

The Hand of the Lord.

The End of the Lord.

The Help of the Lord.

1. He sees the hand of the Lord in all that befalls him. Whence was Davids patience? *Psal. 39. 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, Because thou Lord dost it.* Whence was Eli's patience? *1 Sam. 3. It is the Lord, let him do what seems him good.* Whence was Job's patience? *Job. 1. 21. The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* By the way note, That a godly man is not only patient under his afflictions, but thankful: He is not only thankful for Mercies, but for Chastisements. 'Tis not only, *the Lord hath given, blessed be his Name; the Lord hath built me up; the Lord hath filled me; the Lord hath begg'd me, blessed be his Name; but also, The Lord hath taken away, the Lord hath humbled me; broken me; undone me, left me naked, left me nothing; blessed be the Name of the Lord.* This by the way.

2. He sees the end of the Lord; that God intends his good by all that comes upon him. He knows that all things, and therefore this which is upon him, whatever it be, shall work to him for good.

3. He feels the help of the Lord. When the hand of the Lord is upon him, he feels also the hand of the Lord under him, *underneath the everlasting Arms*, Deut. 32. 27.

The Gospel, as it hath allotted him many Tribulation, so it hath allowed him mighty supports. *A mighty God*, who is the Rock of Ages, *Isa. 26. a merciful High-Priest*, who being tempted himself, is able also to succour those that are tempted, *Heb. 2. 18. Precious Promises*, 2 Pet. i. *Gracious experiences*, Rom. 5. 4. *Patience worketh experience*. This last support, [experience] hath all the rest in it. Experience is the whole Gospel proved. A patient, experienced Christian, hath proved all things, what they are; hath proved the World, and what it is, and the worst it can do: hath proved the Word, and what there is in it: hath proved what God is, what Christ is; what grace, and peace, and a good Conscience are; Tribulation often takes away God, and his Gospel; and we never so well prove what God is, as when we have him alone; what grace is, what a good Conscience is, as when we have nothing else left us. Our Religion never shews so much what is in it, as when it's most put to it. When the Adversary hath gotten the greatest advantage of us; of the Sun, of the Wind, of the Ground; when he presseth with most violence, with most fury upon us, then we best know, what the weapons of our Warfare are. The comforts and supports of Religion are not known, either of what strength, or of what sweetness they are, till they are thus proved. *Hazekiah* had never such a taste of his integrity, as when he received the Message of death. *Stephen* had never such a sight of Heaven, as through a storm of Stones. Christ is never so

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sweet as in a prison. When God meets his Saints in a Wilderness, then he speaks comfortably to them. A patient Christian hath more or less experience of all this; and hence is he supported, keeps quiet under all his sufferings, and carried with courage on in his way.

Be patient therefore Brethren unto the coming of the Lord. You have need of patience, and no excuse for your impatience. The sufferings of the Gospel call for patience; and the supports of the Gospel will condemn your impatience. If you will be godly, count upon it that you have a great fight of afflictions to endure. Venture not into the fight without your Armour: An impatient creature is a naked Soldier: How easily will Satan destroy, whom he hath once disarmed! The more you *can* the less you *shall* suffer. Secure your spirit, and you save your self from harm. There's no Dart shall hurt you, that does not hit your heart. Keep your heart whole, and the Devil loses all his shot. Be patient, and you possess your Souls: keep your Souls, and the enemy loses the day.

Christians, 'Tis of great consequence to you, to be of a patient spirit, and 'tis a great Duty; there's much more in it, than every eye observes.

When I perswade you to *Patience*; know, That 'tis no small thing that I am perswading you to? 'Tis no less than,

1. To the whole of Christianity.
2. To the height of Christianity.

1. To the whole of Christianity: To be truly Patient, hath as much in it, as to be a Christian: To be

be holy, humble, meek, mortified, self-denying, crucified to the world, heavenly minded; all this you must be, or you cannot be patient. Patient and proud? patient and peevish? patient and unmortified, earthly-minded, a self-seeker? This is a great contradiction, as to be proud and humble, fleshly and spiritual, earthly and heavenly, a Christian and no Christian. If ever you will be possessors of this grace; you must be partakers of all grace: Get a believing, broken, self-denying heart; get your spirits furnished with the love of Christ, the hope of the Gospel, the contempt of the World; live above in the other World: Let Christ, Glory, Honour, Immortality, be the portion of your Souls; and the pleasure of your lives, if ever you would be truly patient.

2. *To Christianity in the height of it.* In pressing you to patience, I am herein pressing you to get Assurance. Without assurance, though patience be possible, yet you'll find it both difficult and very imperfect.

What Patience, when I question whether my sins be forgiven? whether God be reconciled, and be not dealing with me as an enemy? What Patience, when I doubt whether my afflictions be not the portion of a bastard, rather than the portion of a Son? when I am not sure, but my present sufferings are sent to carry me down to eternal sufferings? I am in misery and perpetual torments: never a day without it will I see the face of God: nor it may be never shall; this or worse may last for ever. Can if I were sure it would be well at last, I could be quiet; but for ought I know, the Furnace I am in

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may

may be the very mouth of Hell: The diseases, the wounds I am under; may be sent to let out my Soul into everlasting burnings; how can I be patient under such doubts and fears? Make God sure, *Christian*, make Heaven sure once, and then thou may'st set thine Heart at rest; then thou may'st almost as easily exercise, as thine Enemies find thee Exercise of, thy patience.

Christians, if you will be patient, you must be painful: give diligence; be diligent in making your Calling and Election sure: be diligent in duty, be vigilant against iniquity: If you will be patient, be impatient of sin, and you will be patient of sorrow; make sin sure, get it slain by the cross, and buried in the grave of your Lord, sealing the stone, and setting a watch: have nothing to conflict with, in the day of your affliction, but your affliction; beware of carrying guilt with you up upon the Cross. Let not the gall of guilt be mingled with the vinegar of affliction: A mortified spirit will deaden all our pains, and a pure Conscience will bear all our burthens.

Till this be done, I must tell you, you will find suffering to be hard service. 'Tis an easie matter to talk of the sufferings of the Gospel, and to boast great things afore-hand; as you know who did once, and what came of it, *Though I die with thee, I will never deny thee*. But when it comes to the pinch, when Troubles come upon us, when the hand of the Lord touches us, and touches where it's most tender, brings those calamities on us, which are most contrary to us, strips us of those comforts which are most dear to us, takes away all from us, and leaves

us naked ; when we feel the smart of the rod, when every stroke fetches blood ; when the feet are hurt in the Stocks, and the Iron enters into the Soul ; when the vinegar and the gall comes, when the thorn and the nails of the Cross are struck in ; when shame and reproach, when scorn and contempt, when hunger and thirst, when cold and nakedness, when bodily torment and pain, are all measured to you for your portion, and mingled in your cup : If ever God should call you out, to take your part with that Cloud of witnesses, *Heb. 11.* who were tortured, had trials of cruel mockings, and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment ; who were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword ; wandering about in Sheep-skins, and Goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented ; wandering in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth : If ever this should be your case, then you will know how much there is in Christian patience ; and how necessary self-denial, mortification, living in the faith, and fellowship of God, and the power of his Spirit, and assurance of his love, are to your patient possessing of your Souls.

Believe it, *Christians*, the Gospel hath not furnished us with such large provision of Graces, Comforts, Promises, Hopes, for nothing ; you will find need enough of them all. Such amazing, astonishing trials you may be called out to, as nothing less, than the richest stock of promises, the greatest treasure of Experiences, the highest pitch of spiritual Graces, your greatest conquest over Lust and the World, your living under the fullest influences of Divine

Power, and the clearest Sense of Divine Love, will furnish you with an enduring Spirit; nothing less will, but this will do it. Get sin, and the World under, make God sure, make the Promises sure; live in a daily conflict with Sin, contempt of the World, and exercise of all Graces; Live in the obedience, vision, and fruition of your God, and then you are ready for the Enemy. Let your Sufferings be what they will, come when they will, your Souls are at Anchor, and shall have a continual Calm within, how Tempestuous soever the Weather be.

As a farther Encouragement, and Help to this great Duty, consider, that your patient suffering will be,

1. Your witness to the Gospel.
2. Gods witness to your Adoption.
3. The cure of your Corruption.
4. Your triumph over Temptation.
5. The improvement of your Sanctification.
6. The advance of your glory.

1. Your patient suffering will be *your witness to the Gospel*. Who were that Cloud of Witnesses, mentioned *Heb. 12. 1.* but the suffering Saints; that Army of Martyrs recorded *Chap. 11.* whose patience is set forth as a pattern to those that should come after; These are witnesses.

What was it by which they bare witness, but by their patient suffering?

To what did they bare a witness, but to God and his Gospel?

What

What witness did they bear? Why, *That the Gospel is true*. The sufferings of the Saints, are their Seal to the Gospel: As he that believeth, so much more, he that suffereth in Faith, hath set to his Seal that God is true. In the Faith and patience of the Saints, may be seen (as the Seal in the wax) the prints and impressions of the Truth and Faithfulness of God. God hath said, he will uphold, he will not forsake them; and their Patience shews, he doth uphold, he hath not forsaken them. 2^d *That the Gospel is a glorious Gospel*: That God is a good Master, that its good being with Christ any where: That they are no losers by their Religion, but that its wages are above its work, and its pay above its pain.

It were not possible, when they prove how much the Gospel costs them, but they should be weary of it, and repent of their Faith, and renounce their profession, if they did not find the Lord a good paymaster.

The Apostle tells us, 2 Cor. 3. 3. that Christians are the Epistles of Christ, or his Letters of commendation to the World, in whom may be read his Excellencies and Glory, and the incomparable advantages of his Service. And as all Christians, so especially suffering Christians: The Character of Christ is never so visible and legible, as when 'tis written in Blood. The Bowels, and Bountie, and kindness of God our Saviour, never appear'd in more Glory, than upon his Cross; and there's no such lively Transcript of them, as upon our Cross. On his Cross, his Blood; on our Cross, his Spirit, and the precious grace & comforts of it, are most plentifully shed forth, 1 Pet. 4. 14. *If ye be reproached, that is, and*

endure it, *the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you.* The spirit and influences of a crucified Jesus, do never shine forth to such advantage, as in his crucified Saints. Upon the patience of a Saint, under the sufferings of Christ, he that runs may read this written, *I serve a good Master.* Our patient suffering is our witness to Christ, and his Gospel. Christian, when God sends thee to *Calvary*, he sends thee thither as a chosen vessel, that thou shouldst there bear his name before the world. Art thou impatient at this? what canst thou not bear this honour thy God hath laid upon thee? Hath God chosen thee, thee amongst all thy brethren, to do him this honour, & wilt thou be angry, that he did not rather choose some other? 'Twas an unworthy answer, of a good Man, *Moses*, when God sent him to *Egypt*, to appear for him before *Pharaoh*, and to be the deliverer of his people, *Exod. 4. 13.* Send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. Send whom thou wilt, any body but me. But by our sinful shifting our selves off trouble, or our murmurings under them, we say the like; Send whom thou wilt to witness for thee, but let me go free: Let me have my ease, and my quiet, and my liberty, and take this honour who will for me. Unworthy Spirits! Oh me-thinks, Christians, we should rather step one before another; and when our Lord demands, *Who will go with me? Who will bear my Cross?* Me-thinks we should readily answer, *I will go; let me bear it Lord;* and not grudge as we do, that he purs us to it.

Our impatience bears false witness against God, and his Gospel; what is the voyce or the meaning of impatience, less than this?

VVhat,

What-ever is said in honour of the Gospel, what a blessedness, what an ineffable advantage 'tis, to all that heartily own it; yet having proved it, I find it even as much as nothing, by that all the costs and charges of it are cast up: The comforts of it will never ballance them: set one against another, the bad against the good, the bitter against the sweet: Set one against another, and I have made but a bad bargain by becoming a Christian. This is the voice of impatience. Christian, thou passest over thy Murmuring, as a light evil; as if thy pain might excuse thy pettishness: As if it were, because 'tis so common, a very small thing: but is it nothing to bely God, to bear false witness against his Gospel, thy repining that ever thou wert a Christian.

Brethren, Let us do the Lord this Right, by the patience of our spirits; to confesse before the world That all the sufferings of this Life, are not worthy to be compared to the Glory that shall be revealed: And looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith; Let us learn of him, for the Joy that is set before us, to endure the Crose, and despise the shame: that we may sit down at his, as he is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Secondly, Your patient suffering, will be God's witness of your Adoption, Heb. 12. 7. *If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with Sons: The LORD doth not use to deal so with Strangers.*

Afflictions

Afflictions are Gods Family Discipline. Yet mark, it is not the suffering alone will prove our Sonship (the Rod is for the fools back, as well as the child) but patient suffering will for,

1. Patient suffering is in itself, an evidence of our adoption: it is the mark of the Lord Jesus upon us. If thou hast both the same lot, and the same spirit, that was upon Christ, there's thy Lords mark upon thee, whereby he marks thee out for one of his own. Men had need of other marks to prove them Christians, than what the Rod hath made on their backs: 'tis our quiet submitting to it, and that upon Gospel grounds, as hath been before shewed, that must do it, and this will be evidence enough. Note but a Son will thus submit.

2. The suffering state of Christians, is ordinarily attended with other evidences. Sufferings will set patience on work, and patience will set every other grace on work. Whatsoever is in, that finds work for patience, will therein find work for faith, and love, and hope, and self-denial. Christians never appear so much believers, so humble, so mortified, as under the Cross. If there be any faith, or love, or hope in the heart, it will appear in the day of adversity. If there be any fire under the ashes, throw on water, and then you shall hear it, when, it may be, before you could see none there. As Solomon says, *folly*, so we may say, *wisdom*, grace is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will fetch it out. We seldom know, either how bad, or how good our hearts are, till they are thus proved; *This I did to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart.*

Besides

Besides, this is the season, when ordinarily there are most plentiful illapses, and incomes from above. God seldom sends such tokens of his love, as to his Children in prison. The light of his countenance he often reserves for their darkest estate, he sets to his Seal, when the wax is on fire. There have been Christians that would never believe that they were such, till God hath told it them at the stake; the highest joyes, the fullest sence of everlasting kindness have been most ordinarily the portion of Gods Martyrs. When Hell is let loose upon them, then Heaven is most open. Many Christians have not with such refreshings in their Bonds, that their enlargement hath been their Prison.

If this be so Christians, who would fear sufferings? who would not be patient? would it comfort you, to know that God is your Father? Be patient, and you shall know it. What would you not bear, for you might be sure you are the Lords? It may be you have been held under doubt and fears, and sad uncertainties, hitherto all your dayes; you have gone about from duty to duty, from Ordinance to Ordinance, from Christian to Christian, enquiring, and mourning, and complaining, and crying out, Oh if I were sure that Christ were mine, that my faith, and my love, and my hope, and my obedience were sound, and sincere, such as would prove my adoption, then could be I quiet: Why, if ever God calls thee to Sufferings, follow him cheerfully: He calls thee out to prove to thee, that thou lovest him. Fear not to go up with him on the Cross; Assurance is a fruit, that most ordinarily grows on that Tree.

Let

Let hypocrites only fear sufferings, 'twill be sad indeed to them; there's many a self-deceiving Professer, that never suspected himself to be an hypocrite, till persecution made him an Apostate: that's a woful case, to have sufferings come upon him for the Gospel's sake, only to tell him, That he hath no part in Christ nor his Gospel. Let hypocrites be afraid and unquiet, but let Saints be patient. The same trials which will prove them bastards, will prove you Sons.

Your patient suffering is the cure of your Corruption; sufferings are our medicine for corruption, and patience our cure: To what degree of patience a Christian hath attain'd, that degree of power hath he gotten over iniquity. Till lust be conquered, there's no patience: If there be but one unmortified corruption remaining, and an affliction comes and grates upon that, this will provoke; there's no bearing it. Whence is impatience, but from this; for the most part that we cannot bear any violence, that's offered to lust? what is patience, but this; that we can bear that pain, that lust when pinched will put us to? quietly to suffer our pride, our envy, our passion, our sensual appetites, to be cut short of what would gratifie them: and freely to leave them under that which comes to kill and crucifie them; to be able to wait that fuel that feeds, and endure that water that doth quench these fires; this is Patience. When our pride is strip'd of its ornaments, our appetites deprived of their delicacies, our coverousness of its substance, our flesh of its ease? and we either feel no smart, or can bear the
 301 smart

smart of it ; then we are Patient. And when we can thus leave our *Corruptions*, to whatever sufferings come upon them, without taking part with them in their sufferings ; then lust is conquered. Lust no longer lives nor maintains its power, and interest in us, than whilest, in all its afflictions, we are afflicted ; when we feel its sufferings as our sufferings, its disappointments and dissatisfactions as our own, and flie out against whatsoever falls upon it, as it fell upon our Souls. When we can say, 'tis my passion that suffers, but not I ; 'tis my Covetousness that suffers, my pride that suffers, but not I ; and let them suffer (for me) let them be pinch'd and pain'd, and starv'd and die ; none of all this shall move me : nay, herein I do and I will rejoyce : There's Patience. Patience is Lust conquered.

Christians you complain of Corruption, you tell one another sad stories, what a burden, what a bondage 'tis you are under, whilest Lust hath such power in you ; what Briars and Thorns, what plagues and stings they are in your hearts ! You pray, and you mourn, and groan, and sigh in your selves, waiting for your redemption from this bondage and misery. Oh for an humble heart ! Oh for a broken mortified spirit ! oh this earthliness, this envy, this peevishness, this sloathfulness ! I am weary of my life ; because of these Daughters of *Hab*. Wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death ? Why would you be delivered ?

Be

Be patient under Affliction; they are the *Engines* sent from God to slay your *Enemies*; the *Medicines* sent from your *Physician* to cure your *Disease*; Never quarrel with Affliction, unless you resolve to befriend *Corruption*. What, will you be so foolish, as not to be patient of your *Disease*, nor your *Remedy*; either bear the Cross, or else never make your selves believe; but you can bear your sins well enough? Whatever your complaints are, 'tis a sign they come not very deep; 'Tis an Argument, that Gasus light, where the Cross lies so unsupportably heavy.

4. Your patient suffering, will be your *Triumph over Temptation*: A patient Christian is a Conqueror over all the World. By this alone, naked Job overcame the Devil: When Sathan and his Instruments have persecuted you into patience, they have therein brought their Necks under your Feet. This Brazen wall will make their shot recoil on their own heads and hearts: Your Patience will be a Shield to yours, and a Sword in your Enemies Souls. Be patient, and you have won the field, and gotten the day. They will have no hope to drive you to sin, where they see you can suffer. This was Job's Triumph, and shall be yours; In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. You may now make your boast in the words of the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 35. Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword? In all these things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us.*

5. Your patient suffering, will be the improvement of your sanctification, *Heb. 12. 9, 10. We have had*

Fathers of our flesh; which corrected us, and we gave
them Reverence: Shall we not much rather be in sub-
jection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they ve-
rily, for a few dayes, chastened us after their pleasure,
but be for our profit, that we might be partakers of his
holiness. The Fathers of our flesh corrected us, and so
doth the Father of Spirits; they, at their pleasure;
he, for our profit. You'l say, it may be, for what pro-
fit? What profit is there in our Blood? in our Bonds
in our poverty? Why, there is this profit; we are
hereby made partakers of his holiness. There's sel-
dome any towardliness in a child, till it be whipt in-
to him. Gods School of affliction, is a Nursery for
Heaven: Were it not for his House of Correction,
Sion would quickly become as Sodom. Seldom does
any come out thence, but their complexion shews
where they have been. 'Tis with them that feel the
Hand of the Lord, as 'twas with him that saw his
Face; his Face did shine: his very spitting in their
Faces, doth wash them the cleaner. Of all Saints,
there are none raised so high towards the third
Heaven, as those that have been in the Deep: No
Providences give such a lift to the soul, as those
that most humble.

Christians, What-ever pains you travel under,
believe it, the Births may be such, as will make you
forget your sorrow.

I have heard of an holy woman, who used to com-
pare her afflictions to her children; they both put
her to great pain in the bearing; but as she knew
not which of her children to be without, notwith-
standing her trouble in the bringing forth, so nei-
ther which of her afflictions she could have wanted,
notwithstanding the sorrow they put her to in the bear-
ing,

ing, Heb. 12. 11. No chastning for the present is joyous, but grievous; but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness, to them that are exercised thereby.

Oh when you see the Fruit, where then will your Sorrow be? *John 16. 21. A Woman, when she is in Travail hath Sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the Child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a Man-child is born into the world.*

If the Joy of the Birth will make you forget, why should not the hope of the Birth make you to bear the pain?

Beloved, would you bring forth fruit unto God, and will you not bear the Plow and the Harrow? Will you expect an Harvest, and yet must God let you lye fallow, and still sow among Thorns? Let me ask you, and answer deliberately: would you be more holy than you are, more fruitful than you are, or would you not? If you would not, you are no Christian: *Si dixeris sufficit, defecisti*. If you would, is that desire conditional? You would increase, so it cost you not over-much labour and pain; that desire comes to just so much as no desire at all: Or is your desire of an increase, absolute? would you be more holy, what-ever it cost you: Do you so prize, and love an holy, and fruitful life, that you are heartily content, that God should take his own course with you, should take any course that's needful to bring you on to it? Can you freely say, O Lord, I am weary of this trifling, I am weary of this dead and barren life; Lord quicken me, Lord enlarge me, Lord perfect thy work, and fulfil in me all the good pleasure of thy will: So thou wilt but hear me

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In this thing, I freely put it into thy hand, and
take thine own way, and use thine own means. Use
the Word, or the Rod. Command me, or chastise
me, spare not this flesh for all its crying, strip me of
what thou wilt, inflict on me what thou wilt, throw
me whither thou pleasest, let me not want the most
bitter Pill that's needful, *any thing, any thing* Lord;
I hope I can be poor, if thou wilt have me so; I can
be in pain, in disgrace, If thou wilt have me: But
I cannot be unholy, I cannot bear it to be such a
starveling in the state of my Soul. Lord, for more
holiness, Lord for more life, and care, and zeal, and
fruit, let me have it, upon what terms thou pleasest;
only let me have it. Can you say thus to the Lord?
I hope you can; what, and yet be displeased, if he
take *you* at *your* word? can *you* pray thus, and yet
repine and murmur that the Lord hears your *prayers*?
Christian, when the Lord comes to deal roughly
with thee, entertain his chastisements, whatever
they be, with this thought. Now the Lord is about
to give me my hearts desire, now is my day of hope.
This distress, this sorrow and anguish; the Lord
hath brought upon me, may be come to perform
that work which I have long'd to see: What the
Word hath been so long a doing, and yet is not
done; What Sacraments, Prayers, Mercies, have
been so long a doing, and yet is not done. Now is
the time; this may be the means to bring it about.
This bitter Cup hath health in the bottom; this
Plough, and these deep furrowes it makes, look to-
wards an Harvest. The work is doing that I have
been so long a begging. This froward, this senseless,
this sloathful, this earthly, barren heart, which I feel
to day, I hope now, in a little time, I shall be rid of
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for ever. If this be the meaning of my tribulation, as I hope it is, I will wait, I will wait for the fruit, and it will be the fruit, oh I welcome, welcome this blessed Providence.

6. Your patient suffering shall be the advance of your glory. Remember what I have told you already; Your suffering shall go into your reward; according to your deep poverty, so shall your riches be: As 'twas said concerning Babylon, Rev. 18. 7. *How much she hath glorified her self, and lived deliciously, so much sorrow and torment give her.* So shall it be said concerning you; How much they have been abused, and afflicted for me, so much Joy and Glory give them. As sure as the persecutions of the ungodly shall meet them in hell; so certainly shall the Persecutions of the Righteous meet them before the Throne of God. This shall be written on their everlasting Crowns, *Here is the Patience of the Saints.*

By this time you see *Christians*, that a suffering state is not so formidable, nor patience under it so impossible, nor your impatience so excusable, as your hearts are so apt to tell you. Sufferings you cannot avoid, but you may abide them; your carnal hearts will cry out, I can't endure, and therefore whatever shift I make, I must avoid them. The Gospel tells you, You may endure; but (if you will be Christians) you can't avoid them. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution.* Well, since it's thus, Gird up the loins of your Minds, and follow your Lord. Consider him that endured such contradictions of Sinners, and be not weary, nor faint in your minds: The Captain of your salvation was made perfect through sufferings, and

and (if you will be patient) to shall you his followers. Turn to your strong hold, ye *Preservers of hope*; prove to the world that your Faith is no fancy, nor your Rock a refuge of lies; that your profession of holiness is not a meer talk, or vapour. Fear not to bear yours, and thankfully accept your Lords Testimony; when the Lord hath fulfilled his sad Predictions, let your faith and patience seal to the fulfilling his promises. When-ever the hand of the Lord touches to the quick, and you feel in earnest, that 'tis not service to be a Christian; when your flesh begins to fly in your face, and cries out against your Soul, either as *Zipporah* against *Moses*, a bloody Husband hast thou been to me; or as *Job's* Wife to him, Curse God and dye; chide it into silence; *Thou speakest like one of the foolish Women*. If it will still kick, and sting, and groan out to thee, dost thou still retain thy integrity? hearken not to it; leave it to groan alone; as the flesh hath left thy Soul to groan alone under sin; so let thy Soul leave thy flesh to groan alone, under affliction. While thy Soul is quiet, there's the glory of patience, though extremity of torment make thy flesh to roar; nay the more the flesh roars, and the Soul yet keeps silence, the more patience.

If your fears affright you, and prophecy to you before hand, Oh I shall never be patient; if the fore-sight be so dreadful, what will the encounter be? Yet be not discouraged. You say you could be content to suffer, if you were sure you could be patient; that is, you would venture into the water, if you had first learn'd to swim; why when you are in, then you will learn, and not before.

Tribulation worketh patience, where it findeth none; when you are in the fight, you'll find your weapon; your very sufferings will learn you to bear. 'Tis the flesh that stings, and frets, but by that it hath been tamed in the house of affliction, it will be quieter. Be jealous of your selves while you will; let not fore-hand presumption, hinder fore-hand preparation. But whilst you suspect your selves, distrust not your God, follow the Cloud of Witnesses, and lean on the Rock of Ages; and when you are put hardest to it, let your soul take Sanctuary here; *When my flesh and my heart faileth me, God is the strength of mine heart, and my portion for ever.*

Lastly, As that wherein I shall take in most of these former particulars. Let your lives answer that Spirit of holiness which the Gospel hath poured forth upon you; Let your lives be *gracious and holy lives*. Particularly,

1. Let the Grace of the Gospel be *visible*, and perspicuous in your lives; shew forth the virtues of him that hath called you out of darkness, into his marvellous light; Let your lives be the image of that holy Doctrine; or the holding forth of that word of Life, which you have received. Admire that grace of God which hath appeared to you; and let his Grace appear, and be admired in you; let Grace appear in you, in its

Purity,
Power.

1. In its *Purity*, represent your God, and your Christ, and your Religion, in its holiness, to the world. Teach the World to love, or at least, to re-
reve-

reverence holiness; by letting them see it before their eyes.

Holiness hath such a Glory in it, that it will command respect and reverence, when it is clearly seen. Let your paths be pure; as God hath separated you, to separate your selves from the lusts of men, to the Law of your God. *Keep your selves upright in the sight of God; keep your selves unsported of the world;* If they will be spotting you, let it be only with your beauty spots, your Wisdom, Truth, Holiness, Mercy, Meekness, Patience; the Excellencies, and Vertues of your God appearing upon you. Let this, that you are too pure, too precise, too tender, too watchful, too fearful of sin, too zealous against sin, be all they have to charge you with.

Keep thee from thine own iniquities; say not so much as this, *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved must be mine.* Kick out thy *Dalilahs*, Thou must part with thy darling, or thy God; Let there be no secret league, let there be no peace betwixt thy Soul and any iniquity; to which thou mayst either steal out, to delight thee, or turn in to hide thee; let no iniquity be thy leisure or protection, if when thou art pursued by a persecuter, any sin, as *Jael* to *Sisera*, should call to thee, *turn in hither*, & thou mayst escape, remember the nail and the hammer; let no iniquity find a corner in thee to lodge in quiet, that thou mayst not think to find a corner with it, where thou mayst lodge in safety; say to all thy sinful delights, and sinful hopes, get you gone, I will neither love you, nor trust you; however thy sin may please thee, whatever it may promise thee, be sure thou wilt find it a sting in thy Soul, and a stain upon thy Glory.

Keep your selves from the sins of others, beware of the *Leaven* of the proud *Pharisee*, of the formal and vain-glorious *Scribe*, of the extorting *Publican*, of the debauched *Prodigal*, the ambitious *Diotrephes*, the virulent *Tertullus*, the backsliding *Deimus*; beware of all *Epidemical Leaven*, the sickness of the times you may live in: Take heed lest you be drawn away with the errors of the wicked, and so swimming down the stream, you fall from your own steadfastness: Let sinners come up to you, go not you down to them.

Let them never say of any of you, *The man is become as one of us*; *our spot is become the spot of his children*. Let your lives be a rebuke to the ungodly World, whilst you live as the Children of God, without rebuke in the midst of the World.

2. In its Power. Let the power of Grace be seen, in its preserving it self, in its being, and vigorous Exercise, against all the Powers of Hell. The strength of a man is seen in this, that he can bear wind and weather; can live any where, without impairing his health. The strength and mettal of a Sword is seen in this, that Iron will not turn its edge. True Grace is such a Plant, that all the weeds of the Field, and Thorns of the Forrest, are unable to choke it: That will endure not only the Summers Heat, but the Winters Frosts.

Christians, prove your Grace to be a right plant, the right Seed; the Seed of God; let it bear up against all the world. Let not the winds of persecution put out your Light; nor the waters cast out of the Serpents mouth quench your love, nor so much as cool your zeal; especially take heed, that the Dragons Tail do not draw you down among the Fal-

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Ang Stars. You know what a World you live in. You know the old Quarrel between the *Seed* of the Woman and the *Serpent*, both what it is, and that it hath been kept on foot, through all ages, to this day. You know the *[White]* at which *Satan*, and all his *Archers*, have been so long Levelling, and so hotly discharging: the *White Stone* in your Breasts, the *White Robe* on your backs. A good conscience, and a *holy* Life, are the mark, upon which all the *Fury* of Earth and Hell is spent. Oh now prove your Grace to be Grace, by its preserving it self against all this violence. Let the Devil see you will be *Holy*, whether he will or no: Let the evil world see, you will be godly, do what they can: though they may make you poor, and destitute, and naked, yet let them despair of ever making you *ungodly*: let grace hereby appear to be Grace, and the *mighty* power of God in you: which that it may do.

2. Let Grace ripen towards *Glory*: let not the scorching Sun wither your Blossoms, but ripen your Fruit. If you would hold out, get you on: If you would not have your *something* to come to *just nothing*, increase your *Store*. Let your spark grow up into a Flame, your Grain of Mustard-seed into a Tree. I tell you a *Mystery*, The tallest Cedars on God's mountain will best escape the wind, whilst the lower Shrubs are in greater danger of being overturned: if you will stand sure, get you up on the higher ground.

Christians, befool the Devil, let him see himself a Loser by all his stirs he makes against you. It is not the first time, that his cross Winds have prov'd the most auspicious Gales, to put the Saints the sooner into Harbour. What he hath intended for a *withering*

show, but often provid a fruitful Down : those very Clouds he expected should rain down Showers, have often drop down favours : If you will go on, Hell shall help you forward ; the Devil's Rods on your back, shall but help to mend your pace ; his thorns shall be Spurs in your sides : By stripping you of your fleshly Delights, he shall but harve your Lusts, his Friends his Burthens shall be your Ballast, to make your course more steady : Christians are seldom in such a thriving and prosperous State, as when they are just come out of the hands of a persecuting Devil.

Christians, grow in Grace ; there's no season but may be a growing Season : *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* : Let that living Spring, which is broken forth in you, be like the waters of the Sanctuary, Ezek. 47. Which at their first rising were but up to the Ankles ; but a little further were up to the Knees, a little further they were up to the Loins, and at length they grew up to a great river, waters to swim in, the bottom whereof could not be felt. It may be the waters of Grace do yet run low with thee, a little Bay will stop or turn the stream ; thou art yet gotten but to ankle deep, or knee deep, get thee on, stay not, till thy Spring become a River ; let every day, every Duty, every experience, yea, every affliction, add to thy streams ; that as the accession of every little brook to the main Channel, raises the water as it passes along, so it may be with thy Soul ; that the farther thou goest on, the fuller thy Banks may be, till thou comest to be like *Jordan* in the Harvest, whose waters fill all its banks. To quicken thee on in this growth in Grace, consider.

I. That

1. That a little Grace will make but poor work with thy mighty sins ; where Grace is low, Lust is high ; and how is an Infant like to stand before a Man of War ?

2. That a little Grace will not suffice to bear thee up in great Afflictions : that which thou maiest make a shift with in a Calm, will not serve thee in a Storm.

3. That a little Grace will be sadly put to it, if ever thou come to have but little means of Grace.

4. That he that hath but little Grace, is like to have no Assurance that he hath any at all. If thou wouldest have power over Corruption, if thou wouldest stand in the Day of temptation, if thou wouldest not starve in the day of Famine, if thou wouldest have the comfort of the Grace, thou hast, let it grow up to its fuller stature ; Grace, when it is come to Age, will speak for it self, and shift for it self the better : which whilst it is in its Infancie, neither knows, nor can help it self.

Christians, let your Grace grow, and let the Fruits of it increase : Let your Fields ripen to the Harvest. I may say concerning Sinners, not as our Lord said, *Behold the Fields are already white to the Harvest* ; but behold the Fields are already black to the Harvest. The Word is ready to be given ; *Come, put in thy Sickle, the Harvest is ripe ; the wickedness is great.* The Fields of Tares are already black to the Harvest : But oh when shall it be said of you, *Behold the fields are white to the Harvest* ? shall evil weeds grow so fast, and shall only the good Corn be at a stand ?

Bre-

*Brethren, Let your Fruits grow more plentiful, and more perfect daily : Let that Scripture be verified in you, Pro. 4. 18, The path of the just is a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Let your hearts be so filled with the fulness of God, that your pates may drop fatness. Let it be said of you, as of the Spouse, Cant. 4. 18. and Chap. 5. 5. Her lips dropped as the Honey Comb, and her hands dropped sweet smelling Myrrh. Let your lips drop as the Honey Comb ; as you have drunk in the Milk and Honey that comes down from above, so be ever dropping it down to others : Let something of the fatness, something of the fulness, that you have received from above, be alwayes dropping down : Be dropping according to what you have drunk : as you see sinners of whom 'tis said, *They drink iniquity*, to be alwayes dropping iniquity; dropping Oathes, dropping Lies, dropping Scells and reproaches : So let it be said of you, *They drink the Dew of Heaven, and this they are dropping down*. Let no Child, no Servant, no Friend, come into your Company, and go away without some sweet drops from your lips : A word of heavenly instruction, a gracious admonition, a word of encouragement, or a quickening word, let them have; or lift up a prayer, and drop down a blessing upon them. Something or other of the *Dew of Heaven* let them feel flowing from your Lips.*

Let your lips drop as the Honey Comb, and your Hands drop sweet smelling Myrrh. Let your holy Practices, your holy Examples, second, and set on your wholsom counsels and instructions : Let your words be savoury, and your works be gracious : Let
lip

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lip and life speak the same things, and lead on the same way.

Christians, By your nursing up the Souls and Fruits of others, you will ripen and encrease your own. If you should look on all the Fruit as little, which your selves have brought forth to God, you will have this to comfort you, That you have born more upon your Brethrens knees: the Fruits of those Fields which you have planted, or watered, will abound to your account.

Bring forth much Fruit unto God, and be much in immediate converse with God, Phil. 3. 20. *Our Conversation is in Heaven.* Be more elevated and raised in your Spirits daily, above things sensual and carnal.

Above Carnal Delights.

Above Carnal Discouragements.

1. **Above Carnal Delights:** live more purely in the Spirit, let your Hearts be wrought up to such a spiritual frame; that all the joyes, pleasures, and comforts of your lives may be spiritual. Let the Lord be all your delight, Psal. 37. 5. Let it be with you as much as may be, as it is with the Saints already in glory; to whom God is all; who being changed into his Image, and dwelling in his presence, are satisfied in him. Let God alone, be as much to you, as God and all the world. Let the Fashions, and Pleasures, and delights of this world, be so much beneath your Spirits, that it may neither be an abatement of your joy, to want; nor an addition to your content to possess them. Let the light of all these
lower

lower sparks be swallowed up in God ; when the Sun shines, all the Stars disappear and are not needed.

Lift up thine eyes Christian, and see, what pleasures there are within the Veil ; Come, drink thy fill of this new wine, let thy Faith draw the Curtains of Eternity, and take a view of those heights and depths, and lengths, and breadths of that Glory and Joy, which there it may discover. Look on him that sits on the Throne, and those everlasting Treasures of Light, Holiness, Goodness and Mercy, which are streaming from his Face ; on those over-flowing Bowels of kindness and compassion ; on those Rivers of pure and eternal Pleasures, Rest & Peace, that rise from that glorious Throne, and run through the City of God. Behold the Tree of life, and feed thy Soul on its precious fruit, whose very leaves are for the healing of Nations. Hearken to, and fill thine Ears and Heart with those Triumphs and Exultations, those Raptures and Extracies of unspeakable and glorious joyes ; those blessings and praises, those Hallelujahs that are tuned upon the hearts and tongues of the Heavenly Chorus, the glorious Angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, by the vision and fruition of thy God, the God of Glory.

Look on, and possess this Joy and Glory, say to thy Soul, as God to Abraham, Gen. 13. 14. Lift up thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, Northward, and Southward, and Eastward, and Westward, through all the Coasts, and all the Dimensions of the blessed Land of Promise, and holy City ; and then say, Come Soul, take up thy rest here, all this day and night.

thy ol

man's illness or trouble

Look

Look and love, love and long, long and hope,
hope and rejoyce in hope, of this glory of God. Look
on thy God, and never leave looking, till thou art
changed into his Image, and satisfied with his Image;
And here let thy delight and thy dwelling be.

2. Above all carnal discouragements, from any
adversaries, or dangers, wherewith you are baited
and affrighted; as you walk in the Lord, let the joy
of the Lord be your strength, let your Sun be your
shield, let your hope be your confidence, and fear
not your dutie nor danger. Look to your hope, and
you will laugh at fear. Dwell in your reward, and
you will not be afraid to dwell in your dutie: But
of this a word more by and by. Thus much for ge-
neral Directions.

2. I shall next give you some special Directions
for you daily work.

General necessaries depend on, and subsist in,
particulars. As there can be no Religion in a King-
dom, unlesse it be first in particular Families, nor
none in Families, unlesse it be in particular persons;
so a general course of Christianity there cannot be,
unlesse it be supported in our particular daily walk.

The advice I am giving you, I have in part bor-
rowed for your use, which some of you may possi-
bly have received elsewhere.

Before I give you the particular directions, I
shall first premise these things:

1. Count upon this, that the Directions I am
now giving you, (if you ever mean to bring it to
any thing) will cost you pains and labour: and how
can you count your selves Christians, if you refuse
to be at the necessary cost of Christianity? If you
think

think to be Christians without labour, or if you will stand out from Christianity, to save your labour, you are a like wife in both. Either come to a Resolution to fall upon an industrious painful life, or 'twill be in vain to give you counsel.

2. Practice the Directions I shall give you in pursuance of your Covenant with God; wherein you have ingaged to take the strictest severest Laws of Christ, for the Rule of thy Life. What I am pressing on you, for the matter of it, is no more than you have bound yourselves to, as Christians. Remember your bonds, and let this holy practice be followed on by you, as the paying your Vows. Remember daily, the vows of God are upon you, and there is not any material thing here prescribed to you, which falls not under your vows. Your Covenant, if your eye be much upon it, will be a cord to hold you to your work.

3. Press hard for sensible Communion with God in all your Duties.

4. Keep up a spiritual and holy frame from Dutie to Dutie. Remember what I have elsewhere spoken to you more at large, on these two particulars. See that there be Religion in your duties, and confine not your Religion to your duties.

5. Be Watchful. The life of all Religion lies much here; what-ever you resolve upon, will come to nothing without it. Watchfulness is the Executioner of your will. Let your eye be upon your Rule, and your work. Especially, watch against your *prevailing sins*. There's no Christian that observes himself, but may find some one sin or more that in regard of their power over him, are taller by the head and shoulders than all the rest. In some
Pride

in others *Idleness*, in others *Passion*, in others *Stoutness*. It may be, if thou searchest, some one of these four, or possibly some other may be it, that by a speciality thou mayst call [*thine iniquity*.] Find out what it is, and know, that there thy main work lies. In vain wilt thou strive in other duties, till that which hinders be removed out of the way. *Fight neither against small nor great, but against the King of Israel.* Where the Enemy most ordinarily makes his breach upon thee, set the stronger Guard. Let thy daily conflicts be here, and observe diligently, with what success.

6. Walk on thy course in the Name and Strength of the Lord Jesus. Live by Faith. Depend on Christ for the assistance of his mighty Spirit. Forget not this, for otherwise thou wilt go but lamely on.

These things premised, I shall now give you the particular Directions.

1. Directions for the Evening.

Every Evening before you sleep, withdraw your selves from the World, and having set your hearts as in the presence of God, charge them before God, to answer to these following Interrogatories.

1. Concerning your Duties.

Q. 1. Did not God find me on my bed, when he expected me on my knees?

2. Was there not more of Custom and Fashion, than of Conscience and Affection, either in my secret or family Duties?

3. Had

(12)
3. Had I any sensible Communion with God in my duties :

4. Have I not neglected, or been careless and slovenly in reading the Word and holy Meditation ?

2. Concerning your Sins,

Q. 1. Do I live in nothing that I know to be a sin ?

2. Have I kept me from MINE Iniquity ? What victory have I yet gotten over it ?

3. Am I a mourner for mine own, and the sins of the Land ?

3. Concerning your Temptations,

Q. 1. Have I feared, watched against, and not run into temptation ?

2. What temptations have I overcome this day ?

3. Have I had a care of my Company ?

4. Concerning your Heart,

Q. 1. Have I held mine heart in a serious, spiritual, gracious frame ? have my calls to duty ever found me in a preparation to duty ?

2. Hath the Lord been ever before mine eyes, and Eternity upon my heart ?

3. Have I been much in holy Ejaculations ?

4. Have I not given liberty to the workings of Pride, sinful Anger, Discontent, or Impatience ?

5. Have I made conscience of evil thoughts ?

5. Cont.

5. Concerning Conscience:

Q. 1. Hath my Conscience neither been blind nor dumb, nor my heart deaf or headstrong against it?

2. Have I done nothing against, nor with a doubting Conscience?

3. Have I neither defiled mine own, nor wittingly scandalized my Brothers conscience?

6. Concerning your Tongue:

Q. Have I bridled my Tongue?

2. Have I spoken evil of no man?

3. Hath the Law of the Lord been in my mouth, as I sate in my house, or went by the way, as I was lying down, and rising up?

7. Concerning your Talents:

Q. 1. Have I not wasted or vainly spent any part of my Estate? hath neither my pride had a share, nor my Appetite more than its share?

2. Have I not sent Christ away without an Almes, when I had it by me?

3. Have I redeemed my time from

Needles Visits:

Idle imaginations:

Fruitless Discourse, and

Unnecessary Sleep:

4. Have I not lost an opportunity this day, of doing or receiving good? have I not neglected to exhort or reprove, when occasion hath been given? and if I have been reprov'd, how have I born it?

8. Concerning your Tables.

Q. 1. Did I not sit down, with no higher ends than a Beast, only to please my appetite? Did I eat and drink to the Glory of God?

2. Did I not eat or drink to excess?

3. Did I not rise from the Table without letting fall any thing of God there?

4. Did I not mock God, when I pretended to crave a Blessing, or return Thanks?

9. Concerning your Calling.

Q. 1. Have I been serving the Lord this day, in my particular Calling?

2. Have I not been idle?

3. Have I not over-eagerly minded my earthly affairs?

4. Have I defrauded no man, wronged no man?

5. Have I dropped never a Lye, nor broken promise in all my dealings?

10. Concerning your Relations.

Q. Have I faithfully discharged and done nothing against my duty to my Relations? Have I behaved my self

As a Christian	{	Husband,
		Wife,
		Parent,
		Child,
		Master,
		Servant?

11. Concerning your carriage to those Within.

Q. Have I carried my self towards all Saints

1. Lovingly,
- Delighting in them.
- Bearing with them.
- Covering their Infirmities.

2. Peaceably, not provoking them to Envy?
3. Profitably, provoking them to love and good works.

12. Concerning your carriage to those Without.

Q. Have I carried my self to those without,

1. Wisely, that they have not been a snare to me, nor I through my fault become a prey to them?

2. Inoffensively: Have I not been a stumbling block to them?

3. Courteously and compassionately, that I might the better win upon them?

3. Concerning Providences.

Q. 1. Have I diligently observed all the remarkable Providences of God towards me, especially such as have come in, as the returns of Prayer?

2. Have I been thankful for my daily mercies?

3. Have I born this dayes crosses?

14. Concerning the use of your Liberty.

Q. Have I kept my self far enough within my bounds?

In Sum,

Q. 1. What have I done, for God or my Soul this day? have I not lost one day more?

2. Have I led, this day

{	Diligent	}	Life.
	Watchful		
	Self-denying		

Directions

Directions for the Morning.

1. If through necessity or carelessness, you have omitted the reading and weighing these Questions in the Evening, be sure to do it now.

2. Ask thy self. What Sins have I committed? What duties have I omitted? Against which of these Rules have I offended the day fore-going? And renew thy repentance, and double thy watch.

3. Examine whether God were first and last in thy Thoughts, Morning and Evening.

4. Be careful to set thine ends right for all the day.

An Advertisement.

If you want time to make daily enquiry upon every one of the fore-mentioned particulars, (they being so many) set a mark upon, or write out such of them, as most especially concern your case, and let not them be forgotten. Think not thy self excused from this course, because 'tis too long; when, if need be, thou mayst thus make it shorter: Better cut short, than wholly give out.

For the help of the weaker, I shall gather out these few of the chief Interrogatories, which when they are straitned for time, they may only use; and to which they may add more as they have occasion and opportunity.

Q. 1. Was I serious, and had I any sensible Communion with God, this day, in my secret and Family Duties ?

2. Hath it been my care to keep mine heart in an holy Frame, from Duty to Duty ?

3. Have I been much in holy Ejaculations ?

4. Have I not given liberty to the working of Pride, sinful Anger, Discontent, or Impatience ; nor so much as to vain thoughts ?

5. Have I not inordinately minded earthly things ?

6. Have I kept me from [*Mine*] iniquity, and not lived in any known sin ?

7. Have I wronged no man in word nor deed ?

8. Have I been temperate and self-denying in the use of the Creatures ?

9. Hath

9. Hath the Law of the Lord been much in my mouth?

10. Have I not sent Christ away without an Alms, when I had it by me?

11. Have I not lost an opportunity of doing or receiving good?

12. Have I not neglected nor done any thing against my duty to my Relation?

13. What have I done for God or my Soul this day? have I not lost one day more?

14. Have I been diligent and watchful?

Christian, here is a course prescribed, which by the ordinary assistance, which the Lord doth not deny, you may take up if you will; and which if you conscientiously observe, will be, without doubt, through the blessing of God, attended with great success. And those that do not take up this course, or some other equivalent to it, let them never think to ease their hearts, by idle complaints, I can't attain to such a holy, even, fruitful, heavenly life, as I desire, I would, but I cannot; God will abhor such lazy complaints, and look upon them as they are, a meer device to keep you quiet under a slothful heart.

See your whole Duty daily before your eyes, charge it upon your hearts, take an account of your selves, how you discharge it; set upon it as that which is no other than you have vowed to the Lord; commit your selves, and your wayes to him for success: and if this doth not mightily conduce to advance you in point of holiness, and establish you in point of peace, then say, that both the Precepts and Promises of the Gospel have deceived you.

And thus I have set before you that holy conversation which becometh the Gospel. Take up this holy course; let this be your Life you mean to lead; and let it be carried on,

In an holy Union.

In an United Contention.

In an Holy Boldness.

1. In an holy Union; So the Apostle there adds, *stand fast in one spirit with one mind*. Never look to thrive in Grace, if you do not live in peace. The decays of Christianity ly much upon the score of the divisions of Christians. The Devil hath also taken up that Maxim, *Divide & Impera*, Rent them and ruine them. The reason why our Love is so cold, is because our Differences are so hor. The reason of so little zeal against sin, hath been the great strife among Brethren. The combinations of Sinners have not so much prejudiced the power of holiness, as the contentions of Saints. There are not a few who go under the name of Saints, that have maintained disputes about Religion so long, till they have disputed themselves out of all Religion; their search-

searching for truth, hath been the loss of both love and life.

Christians, if ever you would be any thing, be one; be of one heart, of one mind, *holding the unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace*. It were greatly to be desired, that the people of God were both of *one heart*, and of *one way*: But if this may not be, if there cannot be *Uniformity*, yet let there be *Unity*, betwixt all that fear the Lord in truth.

A few words I shall leave with you for your direction herein:

1. Divide not from the Head; to unite with any pretended Members: hold not with them, that hold not with the Head. Sell not Truth, clear, fundamental Truth, to buy Peace.

2. Divide not from real Members, lest you hereby prove your division from the Head. Christ hath but one body, if you be not in union with the body, you are divided from the Head.

3. See the Head in every Member; see Christ in every Sainr.

4. Prize Christ where-ever you see him. Love Christ, and love his Image; if you will not slight Christ, slight not any Sainr. See if thou an humble, meek, patient, broken-hearted, self-denying, mortified Christian; in whatsoever displeasing form (as to matters circumstantial) he appears, despise him not, reject him not.

5. Prize

5. Prize Peace and Union, at the strength and honour of the body.

6. Pursue Peace and Union with the utmost strength of thy soul. And that you may obtain it,

1. Let all parties that are named of Christ, be humbled under former Divisions. What peace so long as God is angry? Oh how have we provoked the Lord, by provoking one another! Let him only who hath been without sin in this matter, be without sorrow and shame.

Sure they are hard hearts, who are not broken under such breaches. Let us not mistake our selves, nor mis-call that zeal for God, which God will call pride and peevishness.

I speak not against our being offended, either with error or iniquity; we may not call evil, good, or darkness, light, for peace sake; but at our unreasonable passions, against whom we suppose erring Brethren.

If the reproach of the Gospel, the hardning of the perverse, the stumbling of the weak, if the hindring of edification, the promoting of confusion, and every evil-work, which have been the sad effects of our Divisions; if Pride and haughtiness, if Vanity and Wantonness, if Envy and uncharitableness, which have been the Womb from which our contentions have sprung, be matter of Humiliation, then sure we had need be brought upon our knees: We must be melted, ere we can be moulded up into one.

2. Let

2. Let all parties unite sincerely in *their ends*: Let the honour of Christ, the advancement of practical godliness, the destruction of the interest of the flesh, the edification of the whole body, in faith and holiness, be looked at with a single eye, and pursued with a plain and honest heart; let not the interest of a party, the affection of superiority and dominion, the carrying on of selfish or fleshly designs, let the *God*, or the *Christ* you are driving for, unbias your spirits, take the right mark, and let your motions be sincerely levelled at it. If we were once set right in our ends, an accommodation of all our differences about the means, would be more facile and feasible, *Prov. 11. 3, 5. The integrity of the upright shall guide him, the righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way.* Humble, single, honest hearts, are most like to hit upon the good and honest way: If we had nothing to do, but to please the Lord, we should not have much to do to please one another.

3. Let all parties unite in this Rule, *Do as you would be done by*; that is, as being well informed, and advised, and freed from evil, and discomposed affections, (for so the Rule is to be understood) you would that men should do unto you: Allow to others, what you challenge to your selves; or would, if you were in their circumstances: Deny not what you would demand: The same liberty, the same charity that you would expect from other Christians, allow to them.

4. No longer tie up Christ to a party. Say not, *Lo here is Christ, and not there*: Say of all Believers, though

thought of different Forms, *As we are Christs, so they are Christs*. Of all the sub-divisions of *Protestants*, that are considerable amongst us, there's no party, the union with which makes us, or the separation from which unmakes us, *Christians*. We had need to have more to shew for our Christianity, than that we are *Presbyterians, Independants, Anabaptists, Episcopal, or Erastians*; and the Devil must have more to prove us no *Christians*, than this, that we are in union with either of these, or in separation from them.

5. In matters circumstantial, be not over hasty in stamping a *Jus Divinum*, on things disputable and doubtful: Put no more weight, nor a greater necessity, on any thing, than God hath evidently put on it; and spend no more of your zeal about it, than is proportionable to its weight and evidence.

6. Allow for the imperfect state the Church is in. We know but in part; and till that which is perfect is come, and that which is imperfect is done away, we must bear with one another, if in any things we be otherwise minded.

7. Stretch not your Authority beyond your Line, take not too much upon you: Think not to bring all others, in every thing, to your Standard; impose not your consciences, as a Law upon others.

8. Put not conscience to the ill office of being a mere *Make-bate*, catch not up every Notion, and presently charge it upon conscience; as that which must be maintained, though to the greatest prejudice

of

of the whole interest of Religion, and so rent and run away from all those that agree not with you. Be not rash, be not headie; be tender, but be warie; be well instructed, if you will be true tender: first carefullie inform thy conscience, and then peaceable follow it.

Of what is that conscience tender, that is not tender of making wounds and rents in the bodie of Christ?

9. Beware of *Censurings* and *Judgings*, of biting and devouring one another. *If ye bite and devour one another, ye shall be consumed one of another.* Let him that is without fault, cast the first stone at his *Erring Brother*. Be not bitter against the bitterness of others: if others *sower*ness offend thee, yet let it not *leaven thee*: Be not reviled into a Reviler, scoffed into a Scoffer; overcome evil with goodness: 'Tis not seldom that our *investives* against others bitterness, are more keen and cutting, than that we complain of: Justifie not what thou judgest; Practise not thy self, what in the same Breath thou condemnest in thy *Brethren*: Throw not back thy *Brother's* Fire-balls in his Face, lest in censuring him, thou be also thine own Judge: Pursue not matters in difference over hotly, but learn modestlie and meeklie to differ, where you cannot agree.

10. Let your conversation be so holy, humble, and heavenlie, carrie your selves in such simplicitie and godly sincerity, towards God- towards one another, and towards all men, that you may command each other to believe, that however you agree not
about

about your *Mother*, yet *you* are all the Children of the same *Father*; that *you* are of God, and that the Spirit of the living God dwelleth in *you*.

11. Hold *Communion* in the things wherein *you* agree, and *Charity* where *you* differ: May *you* not pray, and fast, and hear, and hold *Christian Conferences* together? Sure there is not overmuch of Gospel Spirit, where this will not be granted?

12. Impose not on each other any hard and unnecessary conditions of your *Communion*. Suppose, upon your differing Judgments, there be in some things different practices, which some of *you* judge less warrantable, whilst the consciences of others allow and use; press not the relinquishing such questionable practices, as the condition of your communion; especially, if they be not mingled with the Duties wherein *you* joyn, but are used by any of *you*, at other times, or in other Assemblies. Excommunicate not them from *you*, excommunicate not your selves from them, with whom Christ holds Communion. Judge not that Christ withdraws from all those who are not in every thing of your mind and way. Destroy not all communion, by seeking after a purer, than in this our imperfect state, we shall ever attain. According to this principle, (no communion at all, if not in all) where shall we rest? In all Societies something will offend.

13. And lastly, in your communion receive not one another to doubtful Desputations: Let your prayers, conferences, and all holy Exercises, be studiously

so managed, that there may be a sweet Accord of *your* Spirits therein : Come not together to strengthen parties, or propagate opinions : Let all matters of controverſie be waved ; and hereof let there be ſuch mutual aſſurance given aforehand, that *you* may be together, without ſſear of becoming thorns or ſnares one to another : Which, if it be not unani-
mouſly conſented to, and inviolably obſerved, *your* Communion will be impoſſible, or dangerous.

Chriſtians, are the clear and fundamental truths of the Goſpel, and the more neceſſary and weighty Duties of Religion, ſufficiently underſtood and pra-
ctiſed ? Are *your* Souls ſafe ? Is *your* Calling and E-
lection ſure ? Is the Love, and Life, and zeal of God grown up to that maturity, that you need not mutual help this way ? Have *you* any ſpare time from thoſe things, to ſpend in perplexing controverſies ? Build up one another in *your* moſt Holy Faith, pro-
voke one another to Love, and to good works ; en-
courage, eſtabliſh, and ſtrengthen one another in the known wayes of holineſs ; and if *you* find not this both better work, and work enough for *you*, then take *your* liberty.

Theſe things do, live in peace, and love, and the God of peace ſhall be with you.

Hear, Oh ye Friends of Chriſt, by what oblique Names ſoever unhappily diſtinguiſhed ! will *you* come and be Friends one with another ? Are *you* for peace ? Your God is the *God of Peace* : Your Jeſus is the *Prince of Peace* : Your Goſpel is the
Goſpel

Gospel of Peace; and will you not be perswaded to be *Sons of peace*? Your God is one, your Mediator is one, your Faith one, your Baptism one, your Hope one; you are one Bodie, one Spirit, and will you not yet be one Soul?

Oh how hopeful would our condition be; were our hearts generallic set upon peace! We should certainly obtain, did we more resolvedlie pursue it: and what should hinder? have you not yet enough of your contentions, and quarrellings? have not your Souls been sufficiently neglected, your Lusts strengthened, your Faith weakened, your Love withered, your comforts wasted, your names blemished, your holy Profession blamed? Hath not your God been sufficiently provoked, and the Devil sufficiently gratified? are your bellies so filled with gall, and your mouths with gravel, and have you not yet enough of your contentions?

Christians, Slight not these Counsels and Warnings. As you would prove your selves the Friends of Christ, be ye followers of peace. Studie, oh studie these things that make for peace. *Follow peace with a'l men, as much as in you is*, but especially with the household of Faith. *Let there be no longer strife betwixt us, for we are brethren.*

Yet alwaies remember, I am pressing you to an holy Union; whilst I perswade you to follow peace, I must still add [*and holiness*:] I perswade you not to pursue peace, upon terms dishonourable or prejudicial to Truth; They must have both together, that will be blessed in either: Truth without Peace, is as a Jewel without its Cabinet; Peace without Truth, is as a Cabinet with nothing in it. Peace with

without holiness, is as a fair and promising shell;
with a rotten, or worm-eaten kernel; holiness
without peace, is as a precious kernel, under a
crack'd and broken shell.

They that have peace without truth, have no-
thing worth the securing; they that have truth with-
out peace, have little security for what they have.
Peace without truth, is beauty without worth: Truth
without peace, is worth with its beauty marred. Let
both go together, and then they will be, both the
Columina Ecclesiae, the Pillar of the Church, rendring
it consistent within it self; and the *Corona Ecclesiae*,
its Crown, rendring it comely and glorious before
the World.

Be it thus with us, and then Satan look to thy
self, thy Kingdom shall down amain; when thou
canst no longer hold up *division*, thou losest thy *do-
minion*. Then Saints lift up your heads, your Com-
munion shall be sweet, your glory shall be great,
your light shall shine, your fruit shall abound, the
smell of your spices shall flow forth; your adver-
saries shall envy, and your King shall greatly delight
to see your beauty. Oh may this Grace, this Peace
be granted us from the Lord; and let all that love
the prosperity of *Sion*, say *Amen*.

2. In an *united Contention*. *Striving together* (saith
the Apostle) for the *Faith of the Gospel*. Unite, but
strive: strive not one against another; Christian a-
gainst Christian, but strive together; Let your *Con-
tention* be in *Communion*. *Strive together against sin*,
and unbelief; against Hypocrisie, and earthliness:
strive against strife, and debate, and envyings, and
L judgments;

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judgings ; *Strive together with God*, in your prayers and supplications : We often pray, but our prayers do not agree : by keeping at such distance we know not one anothers hearts, and are, so many men, so many minds : every one prays according to his single apprehension, and affections : What one prays, another unprays ; insomuch that we should put the Lord to do contradictions, if he must give particular answer to all our prayers. And possible that may be the reason, why the Lord defers his answer so long, he will stay till we are better agreed what we would have, *Matth. 18. 19. If two of you agree on earth, touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.* Strive together in all holy and united endeavours to comfort, confirm and establish one another in the Faith of the Gospel. Keep up the Communion of Saints, and an united contention against sin and unbelief ; Remember *Heb. 10. 25.*

3. In an holy boldness, in *nothing terrified by your Adversaries.* In nothing, that is, either in *no degree* ; not at all terrified : or else in *nothing that you have to do* ; be frighted out of no part of your duty : or else *at nothing that they do, or threaten to do* against you. Be not afraid to be holy. Tell your Adversaries, when they have said and done their worst, you must, and you will, make bold to serve your God. Fear them not, and they cannot hurt you ; they never hurt you, unless they divert you from your duty.

To establish your hearts in this holy boldness, and against your carnal fears.

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1. Consider, That,

1. By how much the more you fear God, by so much the less you will fear men.

2. By how much the more you fear sin, by so much the less you will fear trouble.

3. By how much the less your adversaries fear God, by so much the less need you to fear them.

2. Believe : *Psal. 27. 13. I had fainted, but that I believed.* Faith is a buckler against fears and faintings; *Ephes. 6. 16. Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Devil.*

[*The shield of faith*] A shield is a wall of partition, interposed betwixt a person and harm; 'Tis only our apprehensions of harm that raise our fear; Faith will save a Christian harmless, and thereby preserve him fearless. The shield is ordained for a security to all parts and against all assaults. Some pieces of our armour are appropriated to one part only; the Helmet is for the head, the Breast-plate for the brest, the Girdle for the loins, the Shoes for the feet; but the shield is a moveable, that is to be lifted up, where-ever the blow comes. Faith is an universal security.

Faith may be said to be a Shield,

1. Instrumentally; As it provides us of a shield, as it lifts up a shield and sets a guard upon the Soul to secure it. It holds up Christ for a shield; it holds

up the *Promises* for a Shield: the very *Commandments* and *Institutions* of God, for a Shield and Safe-guard to the Soul.

Sometimes the *sense of guilt* assailes and weakens the heart: It is not so much any thing without us, as something within us, that raises our fears. How small a matter will fright a guilty Soul? Guilt will make every stroke a stab. It's the barb of the arrow, the venome on the dart, or the sore of the heart, that makes every stroke formidable and terrible. 'Tis the guiltless Soul that hath courage, and boldness. *Hic murus abacensis esto*---Now against this dreadful dart, Faith holds up a Buckler, with a *Crucified Jesus* upon it; and so that's quenched.

Sometimes *darkness* and uncertainties, about the way that we are in, raises our fear. A Christian that knows himself in his duty, in his way, is out of fear. Clearness gives boldness. Whilst we question the warrantableness of the way we are in, every shadow of danger will shake us: Against such feares, Faith holds up a Buckler with this inscription, *Have not I commanded thee?* It shews the Command, and in that, our warrant, and in our warrant our security.

When we question whether our *Worship*, for which we are like to suffer, be right or no, Faith holds up an *Institution* for our Shield.

If this Fear (oh I shall not hold out, I shall deny my Lord, and his faith, if put to it) assailes the Soul; here faith holds up the *Promise* for a Buckler: *He hath said, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper.*

2. For-

2. *Formally* ; Faith not only lifts up a shield, but is our shield ; The very believing in a crucified Jesus ; the very believing the Command , the Justification , the promise , stays and supports the heart against whatsoever may befall it ; *I had fainted but that I believed.*

Christians, whatever your duties, difficulties, despondencies, straits, temptations, afflictions, weaknesses are ; believe, and *you* shall be carried through ; believe , and *you* shall be established : Believe in Christ, and you shall dare to follow Christ ; believe in Christ , and *you* shall go through with Christ, and hold out to the end. Believe, and you shall neither fear, faint, nor fall. Your Faith will both keep *you* faultless , and save *you* harmless , and thereby secure *you* from sinking , and fainting in your minds.

If this be not enough, let me add, that Faith will yet farther scatter all *your* fears, by this double Act ;

1. It will put *your* reward into *your* hands.
2. It will put all *your* troubles to a present end.

1. It will put *your* reward into *your* hand ; it will set the Crown on your head , even whilst the Cross is on your back. Faith makes things to come present , *Heb. 11. 1.* It is the subsistence, or being, of things hoped for ; it gives being to the good things promised, before they are. Hope carries the eye to the object ; looks on things to come , as to come ; Faith brings the object to the eye , looks on things to come, as come, it looks on distance of time, as God looks on it ; on a thousand years but as one day. It looks on Gods *saying* and *doing* , on Gods promising and

and performing as all one. It considers *Glory*, and gives a kind of present possession of it in hand, *Rom. 8. (In) all these things we are more than Conquerors. In Tribulation, in Persecution, in Famine, in Nakedness; (In) all these things we are more than Conquerors.* Not only afterwards we shall be, but in all these things, even whilst we are under them, *we are more than Conquerors*: The conquest is obtained in the very entrance of the Combat. *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.* Believe Christian, and thy *Faith* will be thy *Victory*, thy *Shield* will be thy *Palm*.

27. It will put all our troubles to a *present end*: Faith looks on things to come as present, and thereby, on things present as past: It looks on all things, according as they will be in their issue and end: It looks on things to come, according to what they will be, when they are come. It looks on things present according to what they will be, when they are past. It sees all passing, and considers it as past already. It sees all passing, the World upon its wing, the Fashion of it passeth away. It sees the *Riches* of the world upon their wings: the *Pride*, and the *Pomp*, and the *Gallantry*, and the *Glory* of the World, upon their wings: And it sees the *Poverty* of the world, the *Troubles* of the World, all upon the wing. It looks on the *blackest Clouds*, as *flying Clouds*, and it considers all as gone already. It looks on the clear that is beyond the Clouds: it says, as God says, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*: Not only it shall fall, but it is fallen, and shall not be able to rise.

And

And what place can there be then left for fear or fainting? Was the Red Sea a *Terrour to Israel*, when they saw themselves gotten to the other side? Did *Sampson's* [dead] Lion fright him? Will the Remembrance of what you [have] suffered be a *Terrour to you*, when you are gotten through and are come out of Tribulation? Why, open the Eye of your Faith, and see the Coast already clear; You will see the Red Sea behind you, the Wilderness behind you, *Jordan* behind you, and your selves gotten safe on the banks of *Canaan*.

Come on Soul, what should hinder thee? May be, thou supposest, thou hast a great fight of affliction to endure; grant thou hast, yet fear none of those things [thou shalt] suffer, till thou canst fear those things thou hast suffered. Though thou be now putting on thy Armour, believe, and thou mayest boast as if thou hadst put it off: *Death, where is thy sting? Grave where is thy victory? Where is the Fury of the Oppressor?* Thine enemies are already under thy feet man, Death it self is swallowed up in Victory.

Christians, Cherish, improve, increase your Faith, and this will clear your way of all your fears. Wherefore didst thou doubt, oh thou of little faith? Oh 'tis a sign our faith is but low, when our fears are so high. The day the Lord hears *you* in this Prayer, *Lord encrease our Faith*, he delivers *you* from your fears: Wax strong in faith, and *you* will wax bold in your God.

3. Be humble; 'twill be *your* advantage, that *you* stand on the lower ground: he whose heart hath

already laid him in the Dust, will not fear how low his enemies can lay him.

4. Be peaceable; your *Preces & Lachrymae*, will be your best weapons; the guilt of your unquiet and unwarrantable resistance, will weapon your hearts, more than all your partakers will strengthen your hands, *Prov. 20. 22. Say not, I will recompence evil, wait on the Lord, and he will save thee.* Patient and peaceable suffering, will be the best way to abash your *Persecutors*, and embolden your Souls.

Now gather up all these *Particulars*, and you have the conversation that becometh the Gospel; wherein that I may perswade as well as direct you, consider these following *Arguments*;

2. This is to them, to your *Adversaries*, an evident token of perdition; this united, humble, peaceable, unanimous boldness, in your holy course, whereby you walk in the Spirit and power of the Gospel, and are not frightened or terrified out of it; this is, and will be to your *Persecutors*, an evident token of Perdition. The falls and flaws in the Lives of Saints, and their *Quarrelings* and *Divisions*, amongst themselves do strengthen the hands and the confidence of sinners against them: The fears and faintings of Saints are the finishings of sinners; when Saints hang the ying, sinners lift up the head.

The Majesty and Beauty of an holy life, joyned with and humble and patient Magnanimity and undauntedness, will be a dart in the Liver of the Enemies of it. It is an evident token [to them] of Perdition.

him: It is not only a Death-Token [upon them]; Persecution is a black mark of a Son of Perdition; but it is an evident Token [unto them]: It will read them their Doom; it will make their own hearts to fall upon themselves, and their own consciences to give them their Sentence.

2. This is to you an evident Token of Salvation, [but to you of Salvation] The word is sure, *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God. If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together with him. To him that overcometh, will I give to sit with me on my Throne, even as I have overcome, and am set down with my Father on his Throne. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

[Salvation, and that of God] There's much in that Addition [and that of God] it notes, that the Salvation of the suffering Saints shall be

{ Sure,
{ Great.

1. It notes, That their Salvation shall be *sure*: You shall certainly be saved, for God hath undertaken for it; that's the import of the expression. If it be God that justifies, who shall condemn? If it be God that will save, who shall destroy? The matter is sure, you shall be saved, and that of God. It may be Satan will promise, *Hearken to me, and I will save you harmless*. But he is a Liar and a Deceiver; he is weak,

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weak and carnal, false and will not. It may be the
evil World will tell you, *If thou wilt cast in thy Lot
with us, take our Advice, follow our Example, come
along with us, thou may'st save thy self all this harm
and loss.* But there is as much trust to the children, as
to the Father of Lies: But if the Lord God, the God
of Power, the God of Truth, sayes, *I will save, who
will say nay?*

2. It notes, that their salvation shall be great:
The great God will do for them great things; He
will save them by a mighty Salvation. He will save
them against all those mighty hindrances that lie in
the way. *Who art thou, O great Mountain before Zer-
ubbabel; thou shalt become a plain.* All the difficul-
ties and unlikelihoods, all the astonishing, and flesh-
non-plus-ing Obstacles, that stand in the way of
their Redemption will be nothing before the mighty
God. He will save them from their mighty sins, suf-
ferings, and fears; from the vanity and vexations of
this Earth, and from the vengeance of eternal fire.

Christians, Do but go on, walk with Christ, suffer
with Christ, and fear none of those things, which
you shall suffer: and this shall be to you an evident
Token of Salvation, and that of God.

3. Consider again the Argument of the Text;
*These things do, and the God of Peace shall be with
you.*

What encouragement there is in this promise, I
have already shew'd you.

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Two things I shall only mention here, one of
which hath been insisted on already.

Consider,

First, *If God be with you, all shall make for
you.*

Secondly, *If God be with you, you shall shortly
be with God.*

1. *If God be with you, all shall make for you*: Re-
member what you have heard out of *Rom. 8. 28,*
31. Christians, perhaps you will not know, how
to make a good Construction of some Providences
that may possibly befall you, before you dye. Such
Cases there may be; that Providence may seem to be
a plain Contradiction of the Promise. Suppose the
People of God, in any Nation under Heaven, should
at any time have, not only an Inundation of tempo-
ral Calamities, Famine, and Pestilence, and
Sword, Oppression, Rapine, and Cruelty; but a
Floud of Spiritual Judgments also, breaking in upon
them; a Famine of the Word, an Eclipse of the
Light of the glorious Gospel among them; their
green Pasture trodden down, their pure Waters
puddled, God's Spiritual Worship made to give
place to Will-worship, Superstition and Idolatry;
the Institutions of God, to the inventions of Men:
his House made an Habitation for Dragons, for the
Screech-Owl, and Bittern; for Zim and Jim, and
every unclean thing.

And

And that, in such a time, when they had given themselves to more than ordinary praying, and fasting, and humbling themselves, and repenting of their iniquities; when they had set their faces towards *Sion*, and were full of hopes, that the Lord was about to build, and to plant; to cast out their rubbish, to repair their ruins, to bring in their peace like a River, and to establish his Tabernacle amongst them. Suppose that in such a time, the Lord should even spit in their faces, should dash all their hopes, and put into their hands a cup of trembling; should bring trouble upon their loyns, and cause darkness to cover their faces; should expose them to scorn and contempt, make them a reproach, and a by-word; should suffer them to be trampled upon, as the filth of the World, and the off-scouring of all things.

Suppose you should have liv'd in such times and places, and have heard them complaining thus; All things work for good; why we see all things fall out for the worse; so far are our evil things from working for good, that our good things have wrought our hurt. Not only our outward good things, our peace, and our plenty, but our spiritual good things, have undone us; our spiritual Liberties, and Priviledges, our Ordinances, our Duties, our Prayers, our Fasting, our Zeal for the Lord of Hosts; not only our sins, but our Prayers, our repentings, our reformings have undone us. We have prayed, and fasted, to good purpose; we have even prayed our selves into poverty, contempt, darkness, confusion; into the snares that have been laid for us, and into the hands of those that hate us. All these things are against us; all our fears are come upon us; all our comforts, yea,
and

and our hopes too, are running from us; the whole course of Providence, seems to be driven on to our utter ruine; every day, every hour, it grows darker and darker, worse and worse; every spoke of the Wheel, every turn of the wheel, renders our condition more helpless and hopeless. Our adversaries are become rampant; our Soul is filled with their scorn and fury; our friends, are as a broken rooth, or a foot out of joynt; our hopes are a Spiders Web, or as the giving up the Ghost; the Almighty causes all his storms and billows to pass over us; one day telleth another, one night certifieth another, and prophecies to us nothing but destruction upon destruction, desolation upon desolation; and where is the promise of his coming? the hope of *Israel* is a feece, her Saviour is a stranger; the Ark of God is taken, the glory is departed, yea, and God himself seems to be gone over to the Camp of the *Philistines*, and marching against us; we have waited for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness; the Harvest is past, the Summer is ended, and we are not saved, neither is there yet any to tell us how long.

Suppose you should have stood by, and have seen or heard any such things any where in the World, would you not have said, can any good come out of such a dark abyss? out of such a concatenation of so many dreadful and dismal Providences? Why, by what hath been already said, you might have answered thus, Stay but a while till the whole wheel be come about, till God hath brought off his work from the wheel; and then you shall see, Providence and the Promise meeting together, and kissing each other,

other, and shall be able to say in this case, what *Salomon* did in *Israel*, 1 Kings 8. 56. *Blessed be God, that hath given rest to his People Israel, according to all that he promised; there hath not failed [one word] of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of his Servants.*

Christians, whatever may come upon you, at any time while you live in this World, distrust not your God, nor be at all dismayed; you shall see the day either here or hereafter, and 'twill be never the worse, if it be not till hereafter (take it upon the credit of this word, All things shall work together for good) You shall see the day when your hearts shall rejoyce and say, O 'twas happy for us, that matters went so cross with us; 'Twas happy we were so poor, and brought so low, and laid in the dark, and strip'd so naked, of all that we either took pleasure or put confidence in.

Now we see that the Lord hath a more glorious design, that he was carrying on for us step by step, by every thing that came upon us, than we were aware of, or could have imagined. It's true, the *Shimei's* have been cursing, the *Ishmael's* have been mocking, the *Rabshake's* have been railing, the Ploughers have been ploughing, the Hunters have been pursuing, and had almost overtaken, overcome, and swallowed us up quick; but blessed be our God, that hath not turned our captivity, and saved us by a mighty Salvation; but hath done us good, by all their mocking, and cursing, and raging against us: Now we see, there was such light sowing in our dark dayes; such a Peace a sowing in those deep furrows; such an Harvest of joy sowing in the dayes
of

of our tears, as hath now sprung up unto this glory, and blessedness. We are beholding to the Devil, and his instruments; our enemies have befriended us, though much against their Wills: We could never have shined with such Beauty on Earth, had we not been scourged with such unclean wilps; we could never have laid up such Treasures in heaven, as by their cursings, and cruel persecutions, our Enemies have laid up for us. So our Lord hath told us, *Great is your reward in heaven*, Matth. 5. 12. Blessed are you that are persecuted, blessed are you that are reviled for my sake, for Righteousness sake; for great is your reward in Heaven. It had not been so great had it not been for our great tribulations: Hell hath given us a seat nearer the Throne of Glory. Comfort and encourage your hearts with these words.

2. If God be with you, you shall shortly be with God; *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to my self, that where I am ye may be also. If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the World. So shall we be ever with the Lord.*

Brethren, you that lye among the pots, 'tis but a little time, and you shall hear that Word, *Come up hither*, into the Kingdom, the inheritance, prepared for you. There are two Comes, or Calls of our Lord; the first come, is, *come and work with me*, come and watch with me, come and follow me. The second is, *Come and rest with me*; your work is done, your watch

which is over, your race is run, come and enter into my rest.

The first Come is, *Come down with me*, from the pride, from the pomps and jollities, of this present World; come with me into the Wilderness, into the valley of tears, come and suffer with me, come and dye with me.

The second Come is, *Come up with me*, up out of the Wilderness, up out of your Prisons, up from your bonds: your *Jubilee* is come; come up with me: Come, put off your prison-garments, and put on your robes; shake off your fetters, and take up your palms; lay down your Cross, and take up your Crown: from your Prisons to your Palace; from the Stocks to the Throne: You that have descended with me, are the same who shall now ascend with me to my Father, and your Father, to my God and your God.

The first Come, is the *Come of a Suitor*; Come, grant me your love; give me your hearts, and accept of mine: This is the Errand upon which his Ambassadors are dispatched; As *Abraham's* servant to take you as a Wife for your Lord. This is the meaning of all those Jewels, and the Bracelets, they bring in their hands; the Lord sends Servant upon Servant, Epistle upon Epistle, Token upon Token, and all speak the same word, Come, come, come away and accept of your Lord, and be married to him.

The second Come is, the *Come of the Bridegroom*, Come home with me, into my holy City, into my Royal Mansion; come into my Chamber; come into my Bosom; come and lodge between my Breasts, live in my presence, and rest in my love for ever.

Christians;

Christians, my business while I have been with you, hath been to bring you to God, to espouse you to Christ; and you that have already, or will yet at last be perswaded to give your consent, and will give me leave to make up the Match, I can give you assurance, That he will shortly come and make up the Marriage; and must say to you, as *Naomi* to *Ruth*, *Ruth* 3. 10. *Sit still my Daughter, till thou see how the matter will fall; for the Man will not be in rest, till he have finished the thing this day.* Sit still *Christians*, till you see how matters will fall, and however they fall, know, your Lord will not be in rest till he have finished this thing, and brought you home to be with him where he is.

I am now parting from you in this confidence; that however, after a few dayes I shall see your faces no more in this world; yet I shall shortly meet you in the Bride-Chamber of Glory, where we shall ever be with the Lord.

Beloved in the Lord, I must now leave you, but give me leave e're I go, to deal freely with you, and yet a little farther, in the close of my day, this once more to open my heart to you; and to tell you,

1. What my parting Feares,

2. What my parting Wishes for you are, which I carry upon my spirit.

1. My parting Feares I go off from you with, are especially these:

1. I am afraid, that there are many of you, upon whom I have bestowed my labour in vain: I am afraid that I have instructed you in vain, exhorted,

persuaded, beseeched, and reproved you in vain :
I was the Apostles case, and his fear concerning the
Galatians, Chap. 4. 11.

It is my grief, that when I would have no more to
speak, but an healing word, a comforting word ; I
must yet drop down a bitter word on some of you ;
that when I would speak only from Mount *Gerizim*,
I must yet again speak to some from Mount *Ebal* ;
that when I would leave a Blessing behind me upon
you all, I am like to leave some bound under a Curse.
It's grievous to me thus to speak ; yet for the dis-
charge of my duty, and for your own necessity, bear
with me : I am afraid, that whilst I have been preach-
ing to you, of an incorruptible Crown, of an everlast-
ing Rest, a Kingdom of Joy and Glory : I am afraid
there are many of you, *That have no part nor lot in*
this matter, but are still in the gall of bitterness, and
band of iniquity : If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them
that are lost. And are there none among you from
whom this Gospel is hid ? hid as to the light of it,
hid as to the saving power and efficacy of it ? I am
afraid there are too many ; I am afraid there's many
a blind eye, many a hard heart, many a Soul still in
Prison, under the Power of their Lusts, and *Brutish*
Sensuality : I am afraid there are many such among
you, and are not you afraid so too ? Oh that you
were !

2. I have a greater fear than this ; I am afraid of
some of you, that not only all my past Labour, but
this last will be lost also. Those that stand it out to
their last day, do usually stand it out in their last day.
Blessed be God, that there are amongst you those,
over whom my Soul is comforted : To whom I can
speak in the words of the Apostle, *Rom. 16. 17. God*
be

Ye thought that ye were the Servants of Sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart, that from of Doctrine that hath been delivered unto you, and being now made free from Sin, you are become the Servants of Righteousness. Oh that I could thus speak! Oh that I could thus rejoyce over you all! But as the Apostle said to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 12. 10. *I fear, lest when I come I shall find you such as I would not.* So must I say, with a grieved heart, I fear that now I am going I shall leave you such as I would not. I would not leave one blind person, one vain person, one loose liver, not one unbeliever, or impenitent, amongst you all. Oh what a good day would this day of my departure be? what Light would there be in this dark Evening, were it thus with you? If I might see you all recovered out of the Shares of the Devil, every man's Eyes open'd, every man's Fetters off, every man's Prison broken, and his Soul escaped from that deadly bondage: if every poor deadly Creature among you, who yet lies bound hand and foot in his Grave Clothes, might now at last stand up from the Dead, and live the Life of God, this would be mine and your great rejoycing. But oh I fear with this Apostle, 2 Cor. 12. 21. *My God will humble me, and grieve me, and afflict me, to see in what a woful plight, I must leave divers of you.*

Oh ye sons of the Night, you poor, ignorant, and dark Souls, upon whom the Light hath shined, but your Darkness comprehendeth it not: Oh you poor, obstinate, & hardened Souls, upon whom I have been ploughing, as upon Rocks, & hewing as upon Adamants, who still remain under as great hardness, as if no Dew nor Rain had ever fallen on you. Oh you poor, half-baked, almost Christians, that have taken

up, your stand in your present Attainments: my Soul is under great fears, and must weep in secret for you, whilst my Tongue must be henceforth silent: On every Soul, that is without fear of himself, my Soul is afraid for you, the fearless Soul, is in a fearful state.

Sinners, let my fears be your fears: What, is there such astonishing guilt upon you, and yet not afraid? Such a dreadful Roll writ against you, and yet not afraid? So many Sabbaths, Sermons, Warnings lost, and never to be recalled; nor any Assurance left of one Sermon, or Warning more, and yet not afraid? Such a subtil Devil, such a deceitful heart, such a tempting world that you have to deal withall; such a black and bottomless Pit into which you are falling, and yet not afraid? Oh, what Stocks and Stones hath the Gospel to deal withall!

Beloved, I have laboured much with you, both publicly, and from house to house, to bring you under a due fear and jealousy of your selves; but hitherto your hearts have been too hard for me: Oh yet for trembling hearts, tremble and sin not; fear and pray, fear and hope, fear and repent; *Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling!* Oh if my fears were once become your fears, your fears would become my hopes! Oh what a Day-spring of hopes, would arise from the shaking of secure hearts! These fears would be as the thicker Darkness, forerunners of break of Day.

2. My parting wishes, and desires for you, are,

1. That the good Seed, which hath been sown amongst you, were well rooted in every heart: I wish that my Twenty years Ministry among you, may not be lost labour, to any of your souls.

2. I wish that your next *Seed-man* may be more skillful and successful : that the good Lord will provide you a man, that may reach you in wisdom, gain you in Love, lead you on to life by an holy Example ; and if the Lord grant you this mercy, I wish that such a one may be dearly priz'd and chearfully accepted by you. God keep this Flock from a Ravening Wolf, and a deceitful Shepherd.

3. I wish that there may be no Root of Bitterness springing up amongst you ; that there be no Divisions or Contentions, but that you may live in peace and love, that the God of peace and love may be with you.

4. I wish that this place, where so much good Seed hath been sown, may become a fruitful Field, that the Fruits of Faith and Repentance, the Fruits of Righteousness and Holiness, may be in you, and abound ; that you may be neither barren, nor unfruitful ; that Religion, in the power and practice of it, may so visibly flourish, in the several persons, in the several Families of this Congregation, that they that go by, may see and say, This is the *Field which the Lord hath blessed*.

5. I wish, that whatever Clouds may at any time gather over you, may not fall down in a withering Storm, or a sweeping Floud, but may pass away in a Mist, or dissolve into a fruitful Dew ; that no *Persecutions* or *Temptations* may ever carry you down the Stream with evil men, nor blight any hopeful beginnings, that are budding forth in any of your Souls. If *Tribulation* should be any of your Lots, I wish that it may not be to you, as the *Hail of Egypt*, but as the *Dew of Hermon*.

6. I wish you a joyful Harvest, that you may reap

in Eternity, what hath been sown in time : may you now sow in Righteousness, and therefore reap in Mercy : May every one of you that is now sowing in Tears, for ever reap in joy : May you that go on your way weeping, bearing precious Seed, return with joy, and bring your Sheaves with you : May the Showers of this day, be the watering of your Seed, that it may spring up to Eternal Life.

Brethren, My hearts desire for you all is, that you may be saved ; and if there be any persons that bear evil will to me, my particular wish for them is, The Good-will of him that dwelt in the Bush be those Men's Portions for ever.

These are some of my Wishes for you ; will you joyn your Wishes with mine : will you turn your Wishes into Prayers, and let this be your prayer ; *The Lord grant thee thine hearts desire, and fulfill all thy Mind.*

Brethren, do I wish you any harm in all this ? If not, if it be to be wished, that the word of Christ were rooted in your hearts, and your Souls thereby rooted in the Grace of God ; if it be to be wished, that your Lusts were rooted out, your sins dead and dried up, your foot gotten out of the Snare, your Souls brought into the Fold, your fruits of righteousness and holiness abounding, and growing up unto eternal life : If all this be to be wished, then give in your votes with mine ; wish and pray, pray and press on, press on and wait for the accomplishment of this grace in you all. I tell you again, I wish you well ; and not only I, but the Lord God that hath sent me to you : The Lord Jesus wishes you well ; he wishes and woos, woes and weeps, weeps and dyes, that your Souls might live, and be blessed for ever : He hath

hath once more sent me to you, even to the worst
amongst you, to tell you from him, that he's unwill-
ing you should perish; that he hath a kindness for
you in his heart, if you will accept it: He hath
Blood and *Bowels* for your *Blood* to expiate you;
guilt, to wash away your filth; and *Bowels* to offer
you the benefit of his *Blood*; with this wish, *Oh that*
it were theirs! Oh that they would hearken and accept!
Only I must add, That the Lord hath two sorts of
Wishes concerning sinners: The first is, *Oh that they*
would hearken! Oh that they would come in, be
healed, and be saved! *Deut. 5. 29.* This wish is an
Olive Branch that brings good tidings, and gives
great hopes of Peace and Mercy.

His last Wish is, *Oh that they had hearkened!* that
they had accepted! *Pf. 81. 13.* *O that my People had*
hearkened to me! *Luk. 19. 42.* *Oh that thou hadst known*
in this thy day, the things that concern thy peace! This
Wish hath nothing but Dread and death in it: it is
the *Black Flag* hung out, that proclaims *External*
Wars. The sence is, *Israel* had once a fair time of it;
a time of *Love*, a time of *Grace*, a time of *Peace*: Oh
that they had hearkned then, that they had known
the things that concern their peace! But wo, wo to
them; 'tis too late, the door is shut, the Season is
over, the Day is past; *But now they are hid from*
thine Eyes.

There are three deadly darts in this Wish [*oh*
that thou hadst] it includes in it these three cutting
words,

Thou hast not.

Thou mightest.

Thou shalt not for ever.

Thou hast not.

M 4

1. There

M

1. There is this in it, [Thou hast not.] What have I not? why, thou hast not known the things that belong to thy peace. Thou hast had the door of Glory, the Gate of Heaven open to thee, and hast been call'd for, and invited in, but thou hast lost the opportunity. Thou knewest not when thou wert well offered, nor would'st take notice what a day was before thee, what a price was in thine hand; thy peace, the Gospel of peace, the Prince of peace, a Kingdome of peace was set open, offer'd, and brought home to thy doors, but thou hadst so many other matters to look after, that thou tookest no notice of it, but hast let it slip. There's one Dart, [Thou hast not known.] There's a Gospel gone, there's a Christ gone, there's a Soul, a Kingdom lost.

2. There is this in it, [Thou mightest.] Oh that thou hadst? why, Might I? Ye, thou mightest, if thou wouldst thou mightest. Thy God did not mock thee, when he preach'd peace to thee; he was willing, and wish'd it thine, if thou wouldst, thou mightest have made it thine own; but whilst he would, thou wouldst not.

There's another Dart. [I might have known] I have none to thank but my self for the loss, mine undoing was mine own doing. There are no such torments as when the Soul flies upon it self, and takes revenge on it self; oh the gaspes that such self reflections make! Soul, how camest thou in hither, into all this misery? oh 'tis of my self, my self, that my destruction is! The door was open, and I was told of it, and was bid come in, but I would not. That I am lost and undone, was *not* my Fate, which I could not avoid, but my *Fault* and my folly. It seems to give some ease of our torment, when we

can

can shift off the fault. It was not I, but the Woman, said *Adam*; It was not I, but the Serpent said the Woman; if it had been true, it would have given ease, as well as serve for an excuse. This thought [*'Twas mine own doing*] tears the very coat of the heart. Oh I have none to blame but myself, mine own foolish and forward heart. This is my ignorance, this is my unbelief, this is my willfulness, my lusts, and my pleasures, and my Idols, that I was running after, that have brought me under this dreadful loss. *'Twas my own doing.*

3. There is this in it, [*Thou shalt not for ever*] Oh that thou hadst! why, may I not [*yet?*] Is there no hope of recovering the opportunity? not one word more, not one hour more; may not the Sun go [*one*] degree backward? No, no, 'tis too late, too late; thou hast had thy day, from henceforth no more for ever. There's the last Dart, [*Time's past*] there's the death, the Hell, the anguish, the Worm that shall gnaw to eternity.

This one word [*Time's past*] sets all Hell a roaring; and when its once spoken to a sinner on Earth, there's Hell begun. Go thy way wretch, fill up thy measure, and fall into thy place; The Gospel hath no more to say to thee; but this one word, *Because I have called, and thou refusedst, I have stretched out my hand, and thou regardedst not, but hast set at nought all my Counsels, and wouldst none of my reproofs; I also will laugh at thy calamities, and mock when thy fear cometh; when thy fear cometh as desolation, and thy destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon thee, then shalt thou call; but I will not answer, thou shalt seek me early, but shalt not find me.*

Beloved,

Beloved, my hopes are, and I am not able to say but that you are yet under the first wish; *Oh that they would.* Christ is yet preaching you *to faith*, and sends his Wish along with his Word, *Oh that they would believe!* Christ is yet preaching *Repentance and Conversion* to you, and wishes, *Oh that they would repent,* that they would be converted; and to this wish of my Lord, my Soul and all that is within me says *Amen.*

Brethren, will you yet again say *your* Lord nay? shall Christ have his wish? shall *your* Servant for Jesus sake, shall I have my wish? will you now at last consent to be sanctified, and to be saved? let me have this wish; and I dare promise from the Lord, you shall have *yours*, even whatever *your* Soul can desire.

Brethren, this once hear, this once be prevailed upon; be content that *your* lusts be rooted out, and your Lord planted into your Souls. Be content to be pardoned, content to be converted, content to be saved. This once hear, lest if ye now refuse, ye no more be perswaded with, *oh that they would!* but be for ever confounded with, *oh that they had!* Lest all our wishes and wooings of you, be turned into weepings and mournings over you; this once hear; *Oh that you would.*

I heartily thank you for your good wishes, and good will towards me; for your willing and chearful entertainment of my person, and attendance on my Ministry; and particularly, for your passionate desire of my longer stay among you. Which desire if God had not, my Soul could not have denied you. Though the Almighty, to whose pleasure it's meet that we all submit, hath said nay to that wish of yours;

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yours; yet let your Souls say Amen, to this last of mine, that the Lord God would dwell among you, and in you, both now and for ever.

And having thus finished my Labours among you, I shall now close up with this double account.

1. Of my discharge of my Ministry in this place.
2. Of my deprival. And shall so commit you to God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified.

1. Of my discharge of my Ministry. What my Doctrine and manner of life hath been, is known to you; and what my aim and intent hath been, is known to God. The searcher of hearts, knows, that 'tis the salvation of Souls, that hath been the mark at which I have levelled. My way hath been to use all plainness, that I might be made manifest in your Consciences: Weaknesses and infirmities, both natural and sinful (the Lord pardon it) I have had many. I am sensible that much more might have been done, both in publick and in private, had it not been for a weakly body, and a sloathful heart.

I repent that I have had no more zeal for God, no more compassion to Souls; I repent that I have been no more constant and importunate with you, about the matters of Eternity. Oh *Eternity, Eternity*, that thou wert no more in the heart and Lips of the Preacher, in the hearts and ears of the hearers. But while I thus judge my self for my failings, Blessed be God for any sincerity to his name, and good will to your Souls, that he hath seen in me. Blessed be God, I have a witness in my Conscience, and I hope in yours also, that I have not shunned to declare

to you, the whole Counsel of God. Brethren, I call Heaven and Earth to witness this *day*, that I have set before you life and death, good and evil, and have not ceased from *day to day*, to warn *you* to choose life, and that good way, that leads to it; and to escape for your lives, from the way of sin and death. Oh remember the many instructions I have given you, the many Arguments whereby I have striven with you, the many Prayers that have been offered up, for the guiding and gaining your Souls, into the path of life, and the turning your feet out of the way of destruction. Oh might I be able to give this Testimony concerning you all, at my departure, *they have trodden in the right path; they have chosen the good part that shall not be taken from them.*

Beloved Brethren, with whom I have travelled in birth, that Christ might be formed in you; I must shortly give up my account in a more solemn Assembly: will you help me to give it up with joy, by shewing your Souls before the Lord, as the Seal of my Ministry. Every sincere Convert among you, will be a Crown of rejoycing to me in that *day*? So let me rejoyce, and let my *joy* be the *joy* of *you* all.

What shall I *say* more? If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, any bowels and mercies; if the *Glory* of the Eternal God, the Honour of the everlasting Gospel, the safety of *your* immortal Souls, the incorruptible Crown, the exceeding, eternal weight of *glory*, weigh any thing with *you*, then once more let me beseech *you*, by all this to hearken to that word of the Gospel, which God hath spoken to *you* by me.

2. Of my depriual. The most glorious morning

ing hath its evening; the hour is come wherein the Sun is setting, upon not a few of the Prophets; the shadows of the evening are stretched forth upon us, our day draw; our work seems to be, at an end: Our Pulpits and our places must know us no more.

This is the Lords doing, let all the earth keep silence before him.

It is not a light thing for me, Brethren, to be laid aside from the work, and cast out of the Vineyard of the Lord; and it must be something of weight, that must support under such a severe doom.

I know there are not a few, that will add to the affliction of the afflicted, by telling the world, tis their own fault, they might prevent it if they would: whether this be so or no God knoweth, and let the Lord be Judge. Blessed be God, whatever be, this is not laid to our charge as the reason of our secession, either *insufficiency* or *scandal*.

You are not ignorant, what things there are imposed on us, as the condition of our continuing our Ministration; which how lawful and expedient soever they seem in the Judgment of many, yet have the most specious Arguments that plead for them, left me utterly dissatisfied in my Conscience about them.

I must profess before God, Angels and Men, that my non-submission is not from any disloyalty to Authority, nor from pride, humour, or any factious disposition, or design; but because I dare not contradict my light, nor do any thing concerning which my heart tells me, the Lord says, do it not.

After

After all my most impartial Consideration, after all my seeking Counsel from the Lord, after all my considering, and consulting with men of all persuasions, about these *Matters*, I find my self to be short of satisfaction, that I am plainly put to this choice, to part with my *Ministry*, or my *Conscience*. I dare not lie before God and the World; nor come and tell you I approve, I allow, I heartily consent, to what I neither do, nor can; but must choose rather, that my *Ministry* be sealed up by my *Sufferings*, than lengthened out by a *Lie*. Through the Grace of God, though men do, yet my heart shall not reproach me while I live; *If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.* But however, though I must now no longer act as a *Minister*, I shall, through the Grace of God, endeavour peaceably, and patiently, to suffer as a Christian.

I should, to testify my *Obedience* to *Authority*, have become all Things to all Men, to the uttermost that I could with any clearness of heart: But since *Matters* stand so that I must lose my place, or my peace, I cheerfully suffer my self to be thrust off the Stage.

And now welcome the Cross of Christ, welcome Reproach, welcome Poverty, Scorn, and contempt, or whatever else may befall me on this account: This Morning I had a Flock, and you had a Pastor; but now behold a Pastor without a Flock, a Flock without a Shepherd: This Morning I had an House, but now I have none; This Morning I had a living, but now I have none: *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

Beloved, I am sensible of my Weaknesses and Disadvantages I am under, which may render a suffering

being here the border to be born : help me by your
Prayers ; and not me only, but all my Brethren also,
with whom my Lot must fall ; Pray for us, for we
trust that we have a good Conscience, in all things wil-
ling to live honestly. Pray,

1. That God would make our Silence speak, and
preach the same holy Doctrine that we have preach-
ed with our Lips.

2. That he would give Supports answerable to our
Sufferings ; that he who comforteth those that are
cast down, will also comfort his Servants that are
cast out.

3. That according to our earnest expectation,
and our hope, as always, so now also, Christ may be
magnified in us, whether it be by Life or Death.

And thus, Brethren, I bid you farewell, in the
words of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. 11. Finally, Bre-
thren, farewell, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one
mind, live in peace ; and the God of Peace and Love
shall be with you.

And that God of Peace that brought again from the
Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make
you perfect in every good work, to do his will ; working
in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through
Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory, for ever and ever,
AMEN.

F I N I S.

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